PRÆEXISTENCE.

OR A

Brief Dissertation

Against The

HYPOTHESIS

OF

Humane Souls,

Living in a State *Antecedaneous* to This.

By *E. W.* A. M.

Βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας. *Coloss.* 2. 8.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. R.* for *Samuel Thomson* at the Sign of the *Bishops-Head* in *Duck-Lane.*
MDCLXVII.

This tract is penned in an Elligant language as you scarce meet wd ye like.

UMI

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

HAving ventured thus Publiquely to ingage against Præexistence, I presume not a few will be apt to demand the Reason of it: And though to satisfie the inquisitive in this Circumstance, be not very materiate; yet because it will stand me but in little trouble, I shall not refuse the doing it.

The Principal cause then, of my clashing thus openly with Præexistence, was for that (in my apprehension) it seemed Eccentrick unto Verity, and I could never deem it any thing else but a figment and an Error; and I loved not to see, what I reputed a fable and Imposture, Travel so confidently through the World, and every where vaunt it self for a genuine Truth, and

exact the honour and respect, and Challenge the Credit and assent, which is due alone to veracious Principles; but must needs be questioning the Legitimacy thereof, and lifting up the Skirts of its painted Vail to shew it was a counterfeit. As many bog and sturdy Mendicants, *who pretend themselves to be Persons of Quality, upon strict Examination are found but dissembling Vagrants; so I was half perswaded, that if this Opinion, which Apes and Personates the Generosity of Truth, were throughly sifted, it would appear no better than a Cheat and Fallacy: And something I have done to prove it such.*

Tis confest I might have been as Prudent, if I had kept these Lines in secret, and never permitted them to have seen the Light, unless of those Flames which should have Consumed them: But being tempted a little to make them Publique, it was my Weakness to be overcome; and now it is too late to Repent, it is my Wisest Course to Resolve I will not.

E. W.

NO *PRÆEXISTENCE*, &c.

CHAP. I.

1. *The* time *of the* Souls *first emergencie out of nothing*, doubtfull, *and* incognoscible. 2. *Three different Conjectures about it.* 3. *The Authors method in discoursing against* Præexistence. 4. *The* Hypothesis *of it stated, and explained.*

1. Mongst the dubious Theories, so hotly disputed by the Sophies of the World, the *time* of humane Souls production, is not the meanest: That they had a beginning, is a Truth of Mathematical certitude, and demonstrable by the soundest reasons; but when they were educed out of non entitie, is a Probleme though fiercely debated, not satisfactorily resolved; nor indeed (considering the darkness, and perplexity of it,) can we hope to have it cleared up

to our apprehenſions in this life, by the moſt painfull lucubrations; the head of ſlimy *Nile* is not ſo recondite and occult, nor of half ſo difficult inveſtigation, as the time of Souls firſt *immigration* into being; ſuch craſs and pitchy Clouds of ſecrecie obnubilate and hide it, that the moſt ſagacious and quick-ſighted mortal (have he never ſuch *Lyncean* eyes) muſt not pretend to penetrate them, and deſcrie the veiled myſterie; ſo that unleſs it be revealed by a בת קול an audible voice from heaven, or proclaimed by a winged Herald, from the Pallace of the great JEHOVAH; we muſt utterly deſpair of knowing it, till death ſhall amplifie our ſcience, and make us more intelligent; this the profoundeſt of the *Latin Theologiſts* was ſenſible of; and therefore having wearied himſelf, in exploring the time, when Souls firſt iſſued into life, he reſign'd his fruitleſs diſquiſitions, and was content to be a Sceptick in reference to the theorem; concluding that as underſtanding it, was no eſſential unto happineſs; ſo ignorance of it, would infer no danger. *Non eſt periculum ſi origo animæ lateat, dum redemptio clareat*, St. *Aug. Epiſt.* 157.

2. But though the time of our Souls firſt inveſtiture, with life and being, cannot preciſely be deſir'd by any, yet it is fairly conjectured at by divers.

Some hold the Souls of men, are of a *later exiſtence* than their bodies; and that thoſe being firſt made fit for organization, they are afterwards, at once created and infus'd into them; according to that known tradition; *anima creando infunditur, & infundendo creatur.*

Others opine they are *coætaneous* with theſe fleſhly machins, and conceive that together with them, they

are

are propagated by certain ſeminal excreſcencies, and prolifique emanations, derived from the Parents Souls; and that they are thus produced by way of fæ-tification, by trifling and obſtreperous arguments, they would prove unto the credulous.

Others fetch their riſe a great deal higher, and give their origin a far earlier date, they make them *coæval* with the Angels, and tell us they were once copart-ners with them in their glories; till unfortunately ſliding from the æthereall Paradiſe, they turn'd poor Pilgrims upon earth; and thus the *Platoniſts* rant it, bearing the World in hand, that their eſſences did not then commence, when they became incarnate, and by inviſible Fetters were chained to theſe bulks of fleſh; but that they were born together with the Univerſe, and had ſpent ſome Ages, in the purer ha-bitable parts thereof, before they ſtoop'd to viſit, theſe obſcure and duſkie Regions.

3. This is that Romantick dogmatiſm we are to enquire into; and to the end its precariouſneſs, and falſitie, may the better be detected, I ſhall Firſt, pro-pound and explicate the *Hypotheſis* it ſelf; Secondly, refell the chiefeſt *Arguments*, alledged in confirmation of it; and Thirdly, object the moſt weighty *Excepti-ons* againſt it.

4. As to the *Hypotheſis*, it runs thus; that the Souls of men, did not then firſt ſallie forth from the pro-found Abyſs of nothing, when they began to ani-mate theſe lumps of Clay, and were confined to their earthly Tenements; but exiſted long before in a di-vine and bleſſed ſtate, conſtipated with various privi-ledges, and beſet on all ſides with unparalleld felicity, till at length being cloyed with the Joyes of Heaven,

they longed for corporeal pleaſures; and did not only give way to the ſoft and gentler vibrations of them, and imbibe them in allowed meaſures, and proportions; but grew inordinate admirers of them, and with too lax deſires, and unbridled appetites, rioted on their luſcious ſuavities, to a raſh tranſilience of the bounds of temperance; and this was it which made them miſerable; their immoderate ingurgitation of animal complacencies, drinking deep of that Circean, and intoxicative Cup, they took a ſurfet, fell ſick, and died to their Cæleſtial happineſs; the poiſonous ſteams which roſe from that accurſed Φαντάσιον, they had too frankely drunk of; ſoon ſtruck them with a fatall dizzineſs, and made them topple from their primæval glory, into a lower and leſs happy ſtation; for having ſtain'd their ſpotleſs Eſſences, by the love and practice of impure delights, a great diſharmony befell their nature; their vital aptitude to their firſt refined vehicles, forthwith decayed; their vigorous reaſon was bound up and ſtupefi'd, and they themſelves made quite incapable of an æthereal life: And being thus incapacitated to live above, and driven to relinquiſh their native habitation; they wandred in the ſearch of courſer matter, which might make them bodies congruous to their polluted beings: Now as many of theſe naked vagrants (ſo they may be call'd, being ſtripped of their Cæleſtial bodies) as chanced to deſcend within the *Atmoſphere* of this Terreſtrial globe; and ſtill continued to degenerate, ſoking themſelves in ſenſuality, are ſuppoſed in tract of time, to loſe the uſe of their reaſon, and then of their ſenſes too; which for a time (while the rational powers lie cramped, and benummed with a deadly ſopor) are thought

to,

to concern themſelves in action, till at laſt being tir'd out, with violent and aſſiduous exerciſe, they likewiſe fall aſleep, leaving the forlorn, and drowzy Souls, to the conduct of the *Spirit of Nature*; and this is ſo much their friend, that it will not permit them to lodge for ever in a ſtate of ſilence; but as oft as it meets with fit opportunities, claſping hold of their *plaſtick* parts, which are invigorated immediately upon the conſopition of the ſenſual faculties; crouds them into carnal bodies, and intombs the half dead Creatures, in theſe living Sepulchres: And this their tragical detruſion into earthly vehicles, like bifronted *Janus*, wears a double aſpect; for as it may be reckoned a ſevere correction of their immortallities, in the præexiſtent ſtate; ſo it may be counted a ſignal favour to them; for hereby they are licens'd to try their fortunes in this inferiour World, and to return from whence they fell, if they induſtriouſly ſtrive to do it.

Thus have I briefly depainted the *Hypotheſis* of *Præexiſtence*, and I think in its genuine colours, and proportions; I ſhall now dip my Pencill again, and go on to pourtray the principal *Arguments*, urged to authenticate it; ſubnecting reſpective *confutations* to each of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. *The first Argument for Præexistence, drawn from the nature of* Divine Goodness. 2. *GODS* Goodness *though infinite, not always Active of what is* best, *because subject to the Regiment of his* Will. 3. *This subjection proved from Scripture.* 4. *From the late Creation of the World;* 5. *And the restriction of the Law, to the Jewish Nation.* 6. *From the serotinous Advent of CHRIST.* 7. *The Perpetuity of Hell.* 8. *And the lapse of Humane Souls, if they Præexisted.*

1. THey that present the world with heterodoxes, and would have their specious errors, pass for sacred and infallible Truths; dress them up as well as they can, in the habit of Verity, how absonous soever they be from it; and are very anxious to confirm their vafrous Doctrine, by fucous or colourable reasons; which may be as so many Statumina or sure fulciments, to sustain and shore up its ruent credit; and here the *Præexistentiaries* are no whit behind hand; for the wild Tenet they assert, they strive to establish by several Allegations; to encounter and enervate which is now my Province.

Arg. The First then, and in truth the strongest Argument

ment, they preſs to militate in their quarrell, and maintain their opinion, is the Soveraign and redundant *Goodneſs* of the ALMIGHTY, which they hold is ſtrictly obliged by its own nature, ever to accompliſh thoſe things that are *beſt*; and to communicate it ſelf to all Creatures, in meaſures adæquate to their largeſt dimenſions, and capacities: Now the Souls of men, being capable of exiſtence, long before they were veſted with this groſs corporeity; and it being beſt for them to have exiſted, long before that time; hence it inevitably follows, that they did ſo.

2. That GOD is infinitely Good; is a poſition as true as himſelf, nor can he that is furniſht with the reaſon of a man, offer to diſpute it; for he is ἀρῶτον ἀγαθὸν, the Prince and ſelf originated Good: *Goodneſs* conſtitutes his very Deity, making him to be himſelf; for could he be arrayed with all his other Attributes, ſeparate and abſtract from this; they would be ſo far from denominating him a GOD, that he would be but a prodigious Feind, and plenipotentiary Devil: 'Tis Goodneſs that is the Head and Glory of His perfect Eſſence; and therefore when *Moſes* importuned him for a Viſion of his Glory, he ingaged to diſplay his *Goodneſs* to him: But granting him to be thus tranſcendently and Eſſentially GOOD; yet that he muſt therefore be fatally neceſſitated, to do alwayes the beſt things; is no natural deduction from the Conceſſion; no more than it is to averr, he muſt alwayes be working the moſt ſtupendious Miracles, becauſe he is omnipotent; indeed by reaſon of the perfection of his Goodneſs, he can do nothing ſave what is Good; and by vertue of the Infinity of the ſame, it is as natural to him to ſhed abroad his Goodneſs, *Confut.* *Exod.* 33. 19.

neſs; as it is to the Sun to ray forth his light, or the Fire to diffuſe its heat; but that he alwayes does what is beſt, and ſo can do no more good than he actually does, is hugely improbable; for it is obvious to any indifferent underſtanding, that there is ſome thing in GOD, which in many caſes reſtrains the activity of his Goodneſs, and ſuſpends its efficiency of divers things, that otherwiſe might be done, and if done would be incomparably good; and this coercive principle is undoubtedly his *Will:* For theſe two; the *Will*, and *Goodneſs* of GOD, have a mutual, and reciprocal agency upon each other; and as his Goodneſs ſo far influenceth the Prædominance of his Will, as to incline it alwayes to noble Atchievments; ſo his Will again ſo far controlls the exuberance of his Goodneſs, as to ſelect the enterpriſes, in compleating of which (prætermitting all others, though perhaps more excellent) it ſhall expend it ſelf. And this Supremacy of the Will, over the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, may be made out, both by *Scripture*, and other forcible *Evidences*.

3. For to this agrees that Paragraph of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the* LORD *pleaſed, that did he in Heaven, and in Earth, in the Seas, and all Deep places*: Not thoſe things that were ſimply, and ſuperlatively beſt in themſelves, were brought to paſs; but thoſe that he pleaſed; ſuch as his Wiſdom approved, and his Will appointed to be done: And parallel to this, we find another Text, St. *Matt.* 20. 15. *Is it not lawfull for me, to do what I will with mine own?* A plain intimation, that the exertions of GODS Goodneſs, are not Phyſical and neceſſary; but ſpontaneous and arbitrary; and that he hath power to diſpence, or with-

with-hold, to dilate or contract the gratuitous collations of his favour, as he thinks meet; and very remarkable it is, that at the ſame time when he owned Goodneſs for the *Glory* of his nature unto *Moſes*, he proclaimed of himſelf; *I will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious.* Thereby aſſuring us, that the exhibitions of his Goodneſs, are entirely dependant on his Will; and that notwithſtanding he is infinitely Good, he can expreſs his benevolence as he thinketh fit; and is not bound alwayes to apportion the effuſions of it, to the fulleſt amplitude, and capaciouſneſs of created Recipients (which in reference to them is beſt) but may ampliate, or abate the ſame, according to his own beneplaciture. *Exod.* 33. 19.

4. This is farther indigitated, by the *late production of the World*: For were it neceſſary for GOD to do alwayes what is beſt, and not free for him to do what he will; how comes it to paſs that the World is not yet (according to uſual computation) full Seven thouſand years old, whereas it might have ſtood as many Ages? If any to wade the dint of this objection, ſhall fix its initial period higher, and perſwade that the ſtory of the Creation, deſcribed by *Moſes* in the beginning of his Pentateuch, relates only to the ſublimary World, and this terreſtrial Planet, which was then firſt made habitable and peopled; but that the great Univerſe was longer liv'd, and muſt have its Nativity calculated by an earlier Epoch: This will ſignifie very little; for ſtill the Argument will be the ſame; and admitting the Univerſe were Created never ſo ſoon, yet the ſame queſtion will recurr; why was it not produced ſooner? For ſince the earlieſt exiſtence we can aſſign it, is beſt for it; if it be fatal to

GOD'S Goodneſs, to do alwayes that which is beſt; why did this glorious frame of bodies, and the multigenous Creatures extant in the ſame, ſleep ſo long in the Lap of nothing, before they were awakened into being? Certainly if *Ens* and *Bonum* be convertibles, and if it be good to *be*; then it is better that the Machin of the World (ſo omnimodouſly auguſt and ſplended, and ſo pregnant with accompliſht pulchritude and harmony,) and the goodly beings therein contained, (which are as ſo many *Ectypa*, dim ſhadows, and dark reſemblances of GOD'S Archetypal perfections, as ſtamped with lively ſignatures of his Attributes) it is better I ſay, that theſe ſhould *be*, than *not be*; and if this Poſition be true of them now, it was as true concerning them Millions of ages before they were: Why therefore did they not then actually exiſt? and, why did that Ideal fæcundity, (preſumed to lodge in the Divine Intellect,) forbear ſo long to ſprout forth, and flouriſh into real Entities? Nothing could impead this, but the dominion of GOD'S Will over his Goodneſs, and the power it hath to check and reſtrain the diffuſiveneſs of it.

5. And that it hath ſuch a power, is farther apparent from the *patefaction of the Law, but to one ſingle People, namely the Jews*: For when the Majeſty of Heaven, ſtoopt to the Pædagogy of Mortals, and undertook to imbue their minds, with the principles of Mortallity, and to inſtill into them an excellent Religion; (ſuch was the Law delivered in *Sinai*, though the duties of it were circumſtantiated with ſervile Rites, and a diſcipline operous and irkſome,) he did not congregrate the whole Poſterity of *Adam* together, and reveal his Will promiſcuouſly to them all, and

and indite his ſtatutes for them in their reſpective Languages, that ſo they might underſtand and keep them; but he withdrew into the unfrequented Deſert of *Arabia*, and there in an obſcure place, remote from the notices of the World, by the præconization of Angels, he publiſhed his holy Edicts to a few thouſands of People, the afflicted progeny of *Heber*. Now I appeal to any competent Judge; if it had not been infinitely better, that GOD ſhould have apertly diſpenſt his Ordinances to all mankind, and have ſealed the truth and excellence of them, by mirificous tokens from above, ſo that they could not but have accepted them, for the Canon of their lives; than to have committed them only unto *Iſrael*, in ſo private and clancular a manner: 'Tis confeſt, they were impowred to Proſelite thoſe of all Nations, that would conform to their *Law*; and to adopt them into a participation of their Religious Priviledges: But though this was a mercy unto Aliens and Exoticks, yet nothing comparable to what the publication of the Law to them would have been: For whereas by this contrivance, very few *Gentiles* were won from their Ethmiſciſme, to an aſſociation in the *Jewiſh* mode of Worſhip; had the *Law* been openly proclaimed to them, they would all ('tis like) have received it with as much alacrity, and obſerved it with as great fidelity, as ever the claudicant and ſiccle *Hebrews* did; for as many as ſhould have been Auditors, and ſpectators of its delivery, being θεοδίδακτοι, or inſtructed from heaven, muſt needs have yielded; if not a prompt obedience to its injunctions, yet an unanimous aſſent to the equity and worthineſs of the ſame: And they hereby recommending them to their Children; and they again to theirs, and

ſo on ſucceſſively: The whole World would have been generally tenacious of, and many every where obſequious to, thoſe venerable Inſtitutes; till the Moral part of them had been reinforced, and the Ceremonial antiquated by the induction of a better œconomy. Since therefore the Law, had it been exhibited to all Nations, would probably have found a free and Univerſal reception, and have proved of ſingular advantage to them; the divine Goodneſs, were it alwayes neceſſarily effective of the *beſt things*; ſhould not have cloiſtered it up in the Cuſtody of a few *Tribes*, but rather have openly commonſtrated it, to all the Families of the Earth; and propoſed it with awakening pomp and awfull ſolemnities, to their ſtricteſt obſervation. But now that this was not done; is to be imputed ſolely to GOD'S Will, which laid a reſtraint upon his Goodneſs in the caſe; and made him partial in communicating his mind unto his Creatures; cauſing him to chooſe the *Jewiſh* Congregation, for the depoſitary of his *Oracles*, though with the præterition of the whole World beſides; nor can their aſſumption into that Prerogative, be deemed the reſult of any thing elſe but GOD'S free Will, which inclined his Goodneſs to Elect them, to ſuch an eximious mercy; they had nothing to condecorate, and ſet them off in his ſight more than others: No inherent worth or peculiar merit, that might attract this ſignal favour, (or if in point of Vertue they did ſurpaſs their neighbours, GOD gave them that tranſcendency, and if he had *will'd* it, all people ſhould have been their Peers; and therefore his pleaſure, here checkt his Goodneſs alſo, and made the difference) only *he loved them* (*Deut.*7.) and for that cauſe, choſe them to ſuch an

an eminent bleſſing; and the reaſon why other Nations ſhared not in it is, becauſe he loved them not ſo well; and he loved them not ſo well, becauſe he *would* not: His *Will* obſtructed the effluxes of his Goodneſs towards them, in ſuch a rare inſtance of mercy, as the alarming them out of their Gentiliſm, by the ebuccination of his Counſels to them.

6. Another Argument of the Sovoraignty of GOD'S Will, over his Goodneſs; is his *timeing the Meſſiah's Nativity*, and bringing it to paſs not in the Worlds infancy, or adoleſcence, but ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, (*Heb.* 1. 1.) In its declining Age or grandævity; but how this ſhould be *beſt*, and moſt conducent to the happineſs of Mankind, is to me a Myſtery; for before CHRIST the φωσφόρος, or *Morning-Starr*, aroſe in the Hæmiſphere of this preſent World; we know a palpable darkneſs over-ſpread the greateſt part of it; a piceous Cloud of Error and Ignorance circumtected it; and where the beams of divine Truth ſhone brighteſt, they yielded but a kind of *diluculum*, a faint and glimmering light: To throw abroad the open day, was to be his work, who is *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*. Herein conſiſted a chief part of his *Prophetick Office*, in that he was to repleniſh the Earth with a pure knowledge, and the glorious diſplaies of Evangelical verities; in that he was to be the Expoſitor of his Fathers Will, and the Diſpenſer of his mind, and the great μυσταγωγος, or wiſe Interpreter of Heavens Secrets; and therefore he is Stiled *the Counſeller*, *the Light of the World*, *the Word*, *the Way and the Truth*, *the great Prophet*, and the like. Now the World being inveloped with caliginous ſpiſſitudes, before the Incarnation of CHRIST; and theſe denſe opacities, being not to be diſpelled till his

his coming; becauſe it was reſerved for him as a principal piece of his *Prophetick function* (as I have noted) to lighten the benighted World, and irradiate the minds of men with his luminous Doctrines: Who that is Maſter of his own reaſon, will not conclude it had been much better, that the Son of GOD had been incarnate *ſooner*, and had aſſumed an humane body in the *Primitive* Ages; that ſo being fitted to converſe with men, he might have dictated that perfect Law unto them; the publiſhing of which was one main end of his exinanition, as the trite diverb goes, *bis dat, qui cito dat*, he duplicates his bounty, that imparts it ſpeedily: Which if it hath any alliance with Truth, fairly intimates that if GOD had accelerated the Birth of his Son, and diſpenſed his Goſpel in the Worlds Juvenility; he ſhould thereby have added, conſiderably to the Magnitude of the benefit, and inhanced the mercy to an high pitch of optimacy, which was quite loſt by its tedious dilation, and taxdous accompliſhment. And ſince GOD might thus have ingrandized the bleſſing of the Goſpel, by an earlier miſſion of his *Son* to Preach the ſame; and ſo have amplified the ſignal mercy of our LORD'S Nativity, but did not; hence it is evident, that his Goodneſs in exerting it ſelf, is not tied to obſerve the *Origeniſts* rule, of *doing alwayes what is beſt*; but rather that it acts perpetually, in an even and harmonical compliance with the divine Will; and diffuſeth it ſelf in larger or leſſer proportions, as that permits or commands: Nor know I what could prorogue and hinder the appearance of CHRIST, till within theſe Seventeen hundred years; except GOD'S volition of it, and the prævalence of his Will above his Good-

Goodneſs, determining it ſhould be no ſooner.

If it be urged as a neceſſary *Remora* of his Advent, that there were ſundry Prædictions, indigitating and pointing out the time of his coming; and therefore he was bound to ſtep into the World, juſt when he did, that theſe might not be falſifyed and eluded. It may be Anſwered; that theſe Prophecies were Penned, long after the time of our SAVIOUR'S Incarnation, was pitcht upon and prefixed: And being thus conſequent to GOD'S immutable deſignation, of that happy juncture of time, in which his Son was to be revealed: They cannot properly be ſaid to prevent and ſtave it off, but only to præmonſtrate it. As an Aſtronomers prædicting an Eclypſe to happen the next year, is no cauſe why it does not fall out before; but only a Prognoſtication of the futurity of the accident, which would have been at the ſame time, though he had never fore-ſhown it. So the prænunciations of our REDEEMER'S Birth, were not the cauſe why it was no ſooner, but only præindications of its future completion, which happened no whit the later for theſe: For GOD firſt punctually defined when his Nativity ſhould be; and then Propheſied of it, adapting his prædictions to a juſt coincidence with it. So that though the Meſſiah could not poſſibly viſit the World ſooner, than it was foretold he ſhould; becauſe theſe Prophecies were made to relate, to the real time of his Advent; yet they were not cauſal of his ſo long demurre, foraſmuch as they were inſpired and delivered, long after the period of his bleſſed Birth, was ſtated and fore-ordained by omniſcient Providence.

But admit it were yielded, that CHRIST deſired his profection from the Father meerly upon the account

account of these Prædictions, and that for the verification of them, he was Incarnate ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων, (1 *Pet.* 1. 20.) in these *last times*: Yet still his *Chronical* absence, will nevertheless be imputed wholly to the divine Will, because it extended these præmonitions of his Advent so far, and drew them out to such a length; whereas it might as well have limited them to a shorter tract of time, and made the complement of them *Synchronal* with the Birth of JESUS, (so that it need not have clashed with Heavens veracity) though it had anticipated that, which proved the time of its event by many Ages.

To sum up all in a few words: It had been best for the Sons of men, that the LORD JESUS should have been manifested much sooner than he was; and therefore the detainment of him (procured only by the divine Will) clearly evinceth, that the Goodness of GOD acts subordinately to his Will; and not according to its own infinite plenitude and fertility: For then the rich and Cardinal mercy of CHRIST'S Incarnation, should have been consummated sooner, a speedier completion of it, being most consonous to the nature of the Divine bounty, if it alwayes does what is best.

7. A farther confirmation yet of this Truth; that the Will of GOD presides over his Goodness, so that it cannot alwayes do what is best; may be borrowed from *the perpetuity of Hell*, and the interminableness of those tortures, which after this life, shall incessantly vex the Impious: For had the penalties of mens sins here, been rated by pure Goodness, free and uncontrolled by any other Principle; it is not probable that they should have been mulcted by an eternal calamity,

calamity, the oblectations of them being so transient and fugitive: But since *de facto*, it is so; this convincingly argues that the Goodness of GOD was not left to it self in meting out the punitive sorrows of delinquent Spirits; but by the authority of his Will, was lead to a permission of the extreamest severities upon them, and made to give way to their eternal sufferings. This black and ruefull Phænomenon of Providence, so plunged the great *Origen*, and seemed so very contradictious, and irreconcileable to that his doctrine, of GOD'S doing ever what is best; with the same necessity that a voracious Fire burns up injected combustibles; that to make it the more verisimilous and tenable, he was fain to broach that dangerous error, touching the temporariness of damnation; and to teach that the infernal miseries are not infinite, but after the tædious revolution of indefinite Ages, shall expire and have an end; that the torments of Hell are Cathartical, and when they have once wrought a thorow defæcation, of the excrutiated Patients; they shall all be reprieved from their igneous Prisons, and rescued from that fiery vengance which involves them, into an anodynous and peaceable condition: From which false notion of Hell, 'tis like that confus'd and broken fansie of the pur blind *Gentiles* sprung up; who dreamt that the ἐκπύρωσις, or wofull conflagration, which at the Worlds Catastrophe, shall betide Ψευδῶν τεκτόνας, καὶ μάρτυρας, false and deceitfull men; shall be only εἰς κάθαρσιν, to refine and purge them from their dross and fæculence, and by an exesion of their contracted guiltiness, to reduce them to a niveous innocence: But that the Penances of Reprobates are endless, I shall ever thus perswade

my ſelf; either the torments of Hell are eternal, or the felicities of Heaven are but temporary (which I am ſure they ſhall never be) for the very ſame word that is uſed to expreſs the permanence of the one, meaſures out the continuance of the other; and if *Mat.* 25. *ult.* ζωὴ αἰώνιος, denotes *everlaſting Life*, a bleſſedneſs that ſhall never end; what can κόλασις αἰώνιος, (in the ſame verſe) ſignifie, but *perpetual Puniſhment*, a miſery that ſhall never ceaſe?

Now the main foundation upon which the preſumptuous Hypotheſis, of Hells temporarineſs is erected, is this; *That* GOD *in all puniſhments inflicted on his Creatures, aims at nothing but their reformation*; and therefore will only chaſtiſe their improbities in Hell, till they become better, and then releaſe them: And ſince this is the chief Baſis of the opinion, it will not be amiſs a little to undermine it, in order to ſubverting the ſuperſtructed error; eſpecially ſeeing it will require no great pains to do it; for it is ſo weak and lubricous, that it totters of its own accord, and is ready to reel without a puſh; to ſet it going therefore, I ſhall beſtow one upon it.

That GOD in chaſtening offendents, alwayes deſigns their emendation, is palpably falſe; for many times he cuts them off in the midſt of their crimes, by a ſurrepticious death; and the chaſtiſement depriving them of all opportunities and means of amendment, conſequently prevents the thing it ſelf: But were it granted that all the puniſhment of criminals here, is intended to reform them; yet it does not follow from hence, that this ſhall be the ſcope of it hereafter: For between Helliſh and Terreſtrial penalties, there is as great difference, as betwixt ordinary Correction, and

and capital Execution: Correction (tis confest) is used purposely to better Malefactors, and reclaim them from their exorbitancies. Διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αἱ κολάσεις, (sayes the *Theologer*) ἵνα δείσαντες τὰς δίκας, τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν ἀποχώμεθα. But capital Execution is never destin'd to that end; it does not assist at all towards well doing for the future, but is only a sad recompence for evill actions already past. In like manner there are several Judgments let fall upon the impious in this life; that are meerly corrective and curative, to castigate and deter them from illicit things, and so stimulate and spur them on, to the prosecution of nobler interests; but the torments of Hell are purely executive and destructive, (as I may say) and will be so far from meliorating those that feel them, that they will rather conduce to their pejoration; for the exquisite *Acuteness*, and deadly anguish of them will be such, that it will provoke them to rage and swell, with anger and impatience; to fret and fume against the Providence of GOD, and to curse and blaspheme the Majesty of Heaven for afflicting them; and so will sink them lower, and Chain them faster into that sulphureous Lake, and flaming Dungeon, rather than any way capacitate them for deliverance: We are much deceived if we think accursed Spirits, are made of such *fusile* Metal, as by the longest abode in the heat of Hell, to be melted into obedience unto GOD. No, the longer they burn, the more obdurate they will grow; and their acerbous miseries running parallel with their everlasting incorrigibleness, shall be a standing testimony of this Truth, that the Great GOD does not alwayes do what is best, but sometimes what he will.

Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. 3.

8. But in the last place, to come closer to our purpose. If GOD'S Goodness be not under the command of his Will, but does alwayes what is best; why did it not *perpetuate the station of Præexistent Souls*, and hinder us (if ever we were happy in a sublimer state) from lapsing into these Regions of Sin and Death? If it be Answered that GOD could not prevent this, because the nature of men was from the beginning mutable, and if they would wilfully ruine themselves (a capacity of doing it being complicated with their nature) GOD could no way help it. I inquire then why GOD did not out of his ineffable Goodness, make them immutably blessed? If it be replied because he had already Created as many *Speties* of immutable beings, as possibly he could, and therefore was constrained to make them as they were, or else must not have made them at all. Then I demand again, whether was this mutability essential to mans nature, or only a property and appendix interwoven with it? If it were essential, then how was CHRIST a perfect Man, his humane nature being ever void of that lapsibility, which is a constituent part, and prime ingredient of humanity? And what then will become of all men, that are at last translated to *Cælestial* happiness, and induced with a constant and inalterable nature? their essence must be quite abolished and destroyed, and they transmuted into other Creatures: If it be but a property or adjunct, why did not GOD separate it from them in their first Creation; since the abstraction and removal of it, would not have mutilated their essence (it being but a superfluous appendage of it) but have left the same every way absolute and entire? This I am sure would have

have been best for us, admitting we Præexisted; and therefore the non-performance of it, to me is a plain demonstration, that GOD does not alwayes operate the *best things*.

The result of the Premises is this; that though it had been *best* for the Souls of men, to have lived and acted in a divine state, *Præcedaneous* unto this upon Earth; yet GOD'S infinite Goodness is no conclusive Argument of the reality of the thing: Forasmuch as it is no Law of its nature, to do alwayes what is *best*; but rather to be subject to the motions of his *Will*, and to have its emanations regulated by that: So that unless that gave the *fiat* for *Præexistence*, it could not be the product of infinite Goodness.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

1. *The ſecond Argument for* Præexiſtence, *borrowed from its eminent uſefulneſs, in ſolving that harſh* Phænomenon *of Providence, the* excluſion of the Heathen, from the knowledge of the Goſpel. 2. *That difficulty explicable without the aid of* Præexiſtence. 3. *For GOD is not the cauſe of that their miſery, but* themſelves. 4. *Either by* rejecting *the Goſpel when offered to them.* 5. *Or by* refuſing *to ſeek after it.* 6. *Or elſe by* incapacitating *themſelves to receive it.* 7. *And the evill being thus reſoluble into their own efficiency, ought not to laid upon GOD.* 8. *But if any be debarred from acquaintance with the Goſpel, without their own default, tis probable they may be ſaved by the* Light of Nature. 9. *It being near a kin not only to the* Moſaick-Law, *but the* Goſpel *it ſelf.* 10. *And able with the aſſiſtance of the HOLY-GHOST, to carry men on to ſuch Vertuous accompliſhments, as will* avail *them to Eternal happineſs.* 11. *Or if this cannot be effected without the intervention of the* Goſpel, *they ſhall ſome way or other be* Indoctrinated *with it.* 12. *And that the* Ethnicks *in the ſtate they are in, are capable of* Felicity: *The* Sticklers *for Præexiſtence muſt acknowledge; and this very agnition ſuperſedes the neceſſity of their own* Hypotheſis, *as to unfolding that Cloudy* ænigme *of Providence, the ſad plight of the* Heathen *World.*

§. 2. 1. A Second Argument that the Patrons of *Præexiſtence*, furniſh out in defence of their *Hypotheſis*; and next to be incountered, aſſaults us thus.

It

It is a neceſſary Key of divine Providence, without which thoſe grand difficulties, that occur from the conſideration of GOD'S rigid dealings with mankind, can never be fairly opened and unlocked; eſpecially that epidemick blindneſs, brutiſhneſs and Paganiſm, that involves ſo many Nations, through the abſence of the Goſpel, will be a circumſtance intricate and unaccomptable. It is too plain and manifeſt, that the caſe of moſt men is forlorn and lamentable; they are unacquainted with the Laws of CHRIST, and ſtrangers to the means of *Life* and *Salvation*. The curſed Empire of Hell, extends it ſelf over the biggeſt part of the Earth, and the Inhabitants of it are perfect *Vaſſals* to the Devils Tyranny: *Vice* is enacted by their Laws, and *Sin* adopted into their Religion, and moſt nefarious Crimes received of them for ſolemn myſteries, and duties indiſpenſable: And they are born under theſe unhallowed inſtitutes, and trained up in obedience to them, and ſetled in the belief and affection of them, by cuſtom and education, *Chronical* practice and a number of aſſociates; beſides the pertinaceous and inexpugnable tendencies and proclivities of their corrupted nature to them; ſo that 'tis hardly poſſible they ſhould eſcape them, but muſt inavoidably ſwim down the ſmooth, but perilous ſtream of *licentiouſneſs*, till they be ſwallowed up in the Gulph of endleſs Perdition. And is it conceivable that GOD who hath proclaimed himſelf to be *Love* unto men, and whoſe *Mercies are over all his Works*, ſhould in his menages of the World, ſo far forget his declared *Philanthropie*, and the eſſential *Compaſſionateneſs* of his Nature, as to ſend down *myriads* of untainted Souls, the immediate offſpring of his powerfull Goodneſs (before they had

had any way offended) to dwell in Regions ſo miſerably over-run with *filthineſs* and *barbarity*; that in all probability they muſt be inſnared and captivated by it, and for ever periſh in a fatal complianee with it? No for certain, ſuch an heavy calamity could never befall them here, but as the deſerved puniſhment of ſome horrid guilt of theirs, and notoriouſly criminous deportment in a *Priſtine-ſtate*. But I Anſwer;

ſut. 2. Though the Intriques of Providence be dark and myſtical, and this in particular, deep and miſerable; yet I doubt not but it may be cleverly explained, without recourſe to that *gariſh* Invention we have under debate: For grant the caſe of moſt men be ſad and lamentable; that they are under the black Scepter of the Prince of Darkneſs; that their minds are inſlaved to *Atheiſm*, or *Polytheiſm*, *Superſtition*, or *Prophaneſs*; and that they have no intimacy with the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*, which ſhould diſ-intangle their *illaqueated* Conſciences, and infranchiſe their Souls from the ſervitude of *Vice*: Yet we need not introduce *Præexiſtence* to ſolve the misfortune, nor *father* this their infelicity on the miſcarriages of a *former* ſtate, to prevent daring reflections on *Providence*, as if that were the *Autrix* of it; for in Truth it had no ſtroke at all in it, nor can it juſtly be intitled to an inſtrumentality in producing it, as I ſhall endeavour to evince.

3. That GOD had no hand, in ſtretching out that *ſable* Cloud of ignorance, which obtenebrates ſo *great* a part of the World, is palpably plain from his own moſt infallible Word, in the 1 *Timothy*, 2. 4. where he expreſly tells us, *that he would have all men come to the knowledge of the Truth*; which implies that he has

no

no mind to ſhut up any in Darkneſs and Error; but rather an unfeigned deſire of their inſtruction, and ſcientifique illumination. Nor did he only ἀνυπκειπῶς, wiſh and deſire this, but graciouſly attempt the accompliſhment of it too; for to this end he recommended his Goſpel unto men, a *Pandect* of the richeſt notions, the moſt celebrious and concerning truths imaginable; and by ſuch hands as might render it moſt operative and influential: For that the *Promulgers* credit, might conciliate to its authority, and make it more *taking* and *impreſſive*; he would have it firſt ſet on foot by no meaner one, than his own *Bleſſed Son*; and then carried on by the holy *Miniſtery* of Choſen and peculiar *Predicants*, his *Apoſtles* and deputed *Emiſſaries*; Perſons eminent for their exemplary *ſimpleneſs* and *integrity*; dignified with the power of working Miracles, divinely inſtructed from above; and able by vertue of their inſpired Wiſdom, to baffle and gull the learnedeſt of the Age, and to nonplus and confound the craftieſt and naſuteſt *Sophiſters*, that durſt argue with them, from the Stock of humane reaſon, and acquired *Literature*. And that *Cæleſtial* Goſpel, which was planted by theſe famous *Seminaries*, ſtill flouriſheth in the World; and though they do not every where culminate to an equal *procerity*; yet there are few places into which that *Tree of Life*, hath not (at ſome time or other) diſpread its *verdant* Branches, offering unto all its ſalutary Fruits, that will but take the pains to gather them: And if their be ſtore of barren Waſts, and wild Deſerts on the Earth, in which it never yet took Root and Fructified: Theſe ſqualled Deſolations muſt not be charged upon GOD'S *Providence*, as if that weighed out his Bleſ-

ſings with inequal Ballances, giving all to ſome, and none to others; ſurfeting theſe *Climes* with ſatiety of knowledge, and famiſhing others for want of the ſame: But the real ground of the calamity, is to be ſought for in the boſoms of men, and it will quickly appear to be of their *own* procuring: For wherever People are hood-winkt with a *Pagan* ignorance, and have the Word of *Eternal* truth concealed from them, I ſuppoſe they may thank *themſelves* for it; it being for ſome of theſe reaſons.

4. Either in the firſt place, becauſe they unworthily *reject the tendries of it*, refuſing to admit it when it obtrudes it ſelf upon their acceptance, and repelling it with churliſh and *Antichriſtian* violence; when it importunes them for reception, when it offers to viſit them as a Friend, they take it for an Enemy, entertaining it with boiſterous hoſtilities, and charging upon it furious oppoſitions, and ſo check its kind advances towards them: They hugg their *Chains*, and love their *Fetters*; admire their *Thraldom*, and Court their *Shackles*; ſtrangely doting on their infelicity, in that they are *Captives* unto Sin; and when the *Goſpel* profers its helping hand, to reſcue and aſſert them into *liberty*, they ſcorn *Redemption*, and will *ſtill* be drudges to their *Luſts*, not from neceſſity, but *perverſe* Election. This is one principal cauſe of mens *ſtupid* ignorance of the *Goſpel*; they will not beleive it, nor ſuffer themſelves to be informed by it; the Sun of *Truth* in many places, ſhines glorioufly on their dwellings, but they are *ſhie* of his *Coruſcant-beams*, and ſhut their Windows againſt his *light*, chooſing to ſpend their life in *darkneſs*, becauſe it ſutes beſt with their *will-Works*, which are alwayes ſhameſac't and lucifugous; and this

this ſayes the Great *Evangeliſt*, is τὸ κρίμα, *The Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, but Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their deeds are evill*; So that 'tis not the want of Goſpel *Light*, but the contempt and diſaffection of it that undoes the World: Men might be ſaved by it, even heathens themſelves, did they not hate and ſhun it's influence and diſdain to be ſubject to it.

5. Or elſe a ſecond reaſon why ſo many are ingulphed in *Atheiſme* and Idolatrie, while the glorious Goſpel is latent and undiſcovered to them may be, for that they incuriouſly *neglect to ſeek it*, and imploy their abilities in ſearching after it: The moſt inculti-vate *Heathens* we know are Men, and are endued with the natural perfections of *Humanity*; they have reaſon, and diſcourſe, and underſtanding, and Judgment; by the help of which they can *Dive* into the nature of things, and eaſily diſtinguiſh *truth* from *falſhood*, and diſcern the excellence of one Religion from another; ſo that if they would but rouz up themſelves, and go in *queſt* of the principles of *Chriſtianity*, faithfully endeavouring to retrive them, by their own induſtry, and the divine aſſiſtance (that would in ſo worthy a ſuſception, edge their faculties with a keen *ſagacitie*) they ſhould undoubtedly attain the knowledge of them, and return with *ingeminated orations* in their mouths, every one vaunting the ſucceſs of his *ſcrutiny*, with a joyous and Triumphant Εὕρηκα. But when GOD hath Graced mankind, with the publication of his Word unto ſome of them; and hath ſupplied the reſt with requiſite ſtrengths, and means proper and *idoneous* to inveſtigate it (elſe his affirming *he would have all Men come to the knowledge of the Truth*,

is a flat and downright mockery) and they ſottiſhly recuſe to proſecute the diſcovery of it, and to ingage their abilities in a ſedulous inquiſition after it; *Providence* muſt not be criminated, with their deſtitution of its knowledge. There are Scriptures in the World, containing a Religion of elevated principles, under the Conduct of which they might ſecurely march to Heaven; but they are not ſo ambitious of its manuduction, as to ſeek the benefit of it; and while they ſo much vilipend and ſlight its guidance, no marvell if they lack it: For GOD expects they ſhould ſtudiouſly contrive, and (ſo far as their powers will extend) make way for their acquaintance with his Sacred Oracles; and if they think much to do this for it, they ſhall never gain it: He will not gratifie their Idleneſs ſo far, as to Crown their ſluggiſh and torpid oſcitancies, with what he hath made the reward of diligence.

6. Or Laſtly, a third reaſon why *whole* Nations, and ſuch multitudinous numbers of People, hear no tidings of the Goſpel, is becauſe they have *incapacitated themſelves, for the reception of it*: They are immerſed ſo deep in ſenſuality, and grown ſo perfectly brutiſh and animal, and have ſo debauched their perſons, by low degeneracies from rational and humane life; that they are become unmeet receptables of ſo divine a mercy, and have unqualified, and diſabled themſelves from reaping any profit by it: And GOD foreſeeing this, that *Evangelical* monitions beſtowed on them, would prove inſucceſsfull and fruſtraneous; wiſely detains them, and forbears the imparture of his Goſpel to them, as *Husbandmen* do the proſciſion and culture of arenaceous Fields, of whoſe ſterility they

are

are well assured: And this I conceive was that, which occasioned the HOLY GHOST'S inhibition of St. *Paul's* Preaching in *Asia*, *Acts* 16. and his avocation from *Bithynia*, whither he assayed to go to that end, but by a nocturnal Vision had his purpose interrupted, and his course diverted another way. GOD ('tis like) deemed the *Asiatiques* unworthy of his Word, and saw them incapable of receiving it, if it had been proposed to them; and therefore permitted it not to be then taught amongst them, because the attempt he knew would be unprosperous: Nor need it seem a thing improbable, that men by nequitious practices should arrive at such a rude and savage temper, as to become indisciplinable by the Gospel, and upon that score to be secluded from it; for we must know, that by their subjection to the tyrannies of Lust, and extraordinary violences offered to them, the powers of their minds may be so shattered and dissolved, and the common notions of indispensable Truths written on their hearts, so obliterated and effaced: Reason, the κριτηριον of Good and Evill, may be so debilitated and corrupted; and their whole nature moulded into such a strange incapacity, and contrariety to things Divine and excellent; that they shall by no means be wrought to embrace them, and close with them; but must remain as indocible by the Laws of GOD, as Brutes are by the Sanctions of men; and without a miraculous change of their blockish and ferine disposition, will never be able to deprehend them, though most forcibly inculcated. Now where the Eye of Providence sees people at so untractable a pass; so wofully discomposed in their nature and faculties; so sadly besotted and brutified; and so perfectly Alienated.

nated from true Goodneſs, as to be utterly ſenſeleſs of the rules of honeſty, and deaf to the precepts of Religion; no wonder if it denyes them the *radiant* Goſpel, and lets them wander in *Cimmerian* darkneſs, becauſe Light to them would be offenſive and troubleſome, and inſtruction vain and fruitleſs; and they would ſtill live wildly and at random, in ſpite of the choiceſt Lectures of ſobriety, that Heaven it ſelf could read them.

7. Into theſe three Ranks I conclude the τὸ πολλὸ, or *generality* of thoſe *Pagans* reducible, who are unacquainted with the Sacred Volumes, and ignorant of thoſe Laws of Righteouſneſs, and methods of Salvation therein exhibited. Either they are ſuch as have *oppugned* the Goſpel, and kept it off when it hath been fairly approaching towards them: Or elſe ſuch as have ſupinely *ſlighted* it, and never Travelled according to their power, in a diligent ſearch after it: Or Laſtly, ſuch as by living vitiouſly, and much beneath the dignity of their nature, have ſo unmeaſurably depraved themſelves, as to become quite *incapable* of reliſhing its pure Doctrines, and obeying its holy diſcipline, and therefore were never inſtructed with it. And this much conſiderately weighed, though the greateſt part of mankind; be muffled up with blindneſs and infidelitie, and poſſeſſed with an inſcious and *Atheiſtical* ſpirit, and go on groping all their lives long in darkneſs and ignorance; yet their deplorable fate is at no hand to be imputed unto GOD, nor may his *Providence* be condemned as guilty of inflicting it: For it flows intirely from themſelves, and that they have no knowledge of the Goſpel, is owing to their own *antipathy* to it; diſregard of it,

it, or maliciously contracted ineptneſs for it.

8. Now if there be any in the World of a *fourth Claſſis*, diſtinct from theſe *three* here remember'd, who have kept their intellectuals ſound and perfect, and their affections clear from all groſſer inquinations: Whoſe reaſon is not ſo abſorpt and drowned in the puddles of ſenſe, nor nummed and deaded by the *narcotick* pleaſures of the Body, and a conſtant and vehement love and attendance to carnal delights, as to render them unfit to receive the Goſpel: And who never unkindly repulſed, or ſcornfully deſpiſed it, and ſo put in an *Obex* to hinder its acceſſion to them; but ſo far as a plauſible and civill Life could do it, have purſued it, and prepared themſelves for it. If there be any ſuch in the World I ſay, from whom the Goſpel is with-held, and not through their own defaults, they doing what they can to invite and lure it to them, by prædiſpoſing themſelves, ſo far as they are able to comply with it, and entertain it. Yet neither will this infer a neceſſity of *Præexiſtence*; to acquit *Providence* from injurious dealings with them; for though their condition be hugely pitiable, it is far from deſperate; and if they live but up to that *Light* of *Nature* which is within them, and thoſe κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, or commune inſtincts of Good and Evill (imprinted on their Souls, at their firſt Creation) we may preſume that GOD hath a great mercy for them, and may ſave them through the *All-ſufficient* merits of his Crucified Son, by wayes and methods known to himſelf, though unrevealed to us.

And here if I thought the Truth of this Doctrine, that *Heathens* may be ſaved by the *Light* of *Nature*, would be ſcrupled; I might call forth a number of

able

able Advocates to plead for it; and confirm it by a copious induction of undeniable teſtimonies, out of choice and noted Writers, both *Antique* and *Neoterick*; and to make it paſs the more currently, it will not be amiſs to ſtamp it with ſome of their Autorities: *Dyoniſius* the *Areopagite*, St. *Pauls* Diſciple, and the firſt Biſhop of *Athens*, held that all virtuous livers (though without the pale of Holy Church) might gain felicity, GOD illuminating them with a knowledge requiſite thereunto, by the Miniſtry of Men or Angels. *De Cæleſt. Hier. cap.* 9. St. *Chryſoſtom* taught, that before the Incarnation the true acknowledgment of CHRIST was not exacted, but that the adoration of the true GOD would carry men to Heaven. *Hom.* 3. *in Mat.* St. *Auguſtine* thought that ſome living under the Law of Nature, obtained Salvation. *Cont. Jul. lib.* 4. *cap.* 3. *Clemens Alexandrinus* avers, that GOD gave *two* Teſtaments; the Law to the *Jews*, and Philoſophy to the *Gentiles*, whereby to Juſtifie them. *Strom. lib.* 6. *Juſtin Martyr* affirms, that the *Gentiles* who lived μετὰ λόγου, agreeably to their Reaſon, were real *Chriſtians*; and ſuch he eſteemed *Heraclitus*, and other *Heathens* to be. *Melanction* thought very charitably of the ſober and more refined *Ethnicks*; and *Luther* had hopes of *Brentius* and *Cicero*. *Zuinglius* ſpeaks broad in the caſe, and ſayes plainly that in Heaven he ſhall behold *Hercules*, *Theſeus*, *Socrates*, *Numa*, with other Ancient Virtuoſoes: And of the ſame mind was his Apologiſt *Gualtherus*. To theſe I might add the Suffrages of *Epiphanius*, *Ludovicus Vives*, *Venator*, *Corvinus*, *Collius*, *Andradius*, and many others (were it not ſuperfluous to recite them) all which unanimouſly vote Salvation poſſible to the *Heathen*, by the Light of Nature; that

is

is, in conjunction with the efficacious ſufferings, and perfect obedience of CHRIST, though ſome would perverſly inſinuate that they mean otherwiſe: The laſt here nominated ſtiffly maintained the Paradox, in the *Tridentine Council*, and is moſt ſeverely laſhed for his pains by *Chemnitius*, in his *Examen* of the Decrees of its ſixth *Seſſion*; yet neither did that *Council* determine any thing againſt the point (though he put an occaſion offered by the ſaid *Andradius*, and others alſo of the ſame *Senate*, efflagitated their Cenſure and deciſion of it) but left it free and indifferent, as a *Theſis* of very high probability, if not unqueſtionable certitude.

And to prove the *Light* of *Nature*, a ſufficient guide to Bleſſedneſs (in the abſence of a ſurer conduct) I might argue thus; that the *Moſaick Law* inducted many Souls to happineſs, is a truth of undoubted credit, (for this was the great and ultimate ſcope at which its whole ſubſerviency was levelled) and what was that but the *Law* of *Nature* publiſhed, and drawn up into a methodicall ſyſtem of holy Mandates, and divine inſtructions? And if the *Law* of *Moſes*, and the *Law* of *Nature* be the ſame; if GOD ſaved the *Jews*, under the Adminiſtration of the firſt, what hinders but he may ſave the *Gentiles*, under the Pædagogie of the later?

9. Now that theſe *two* Laws, are *ſubſtantially* the ſame, may be made good by moſt evictive evidence; for wherein do they differ, ſave that the *Moral* Law was openly promulged to a peculiar People, orderly digeſted into ſeveral Precepts, and diſtinctly Ingraven in *Stony* Tables; whereas the other was only inſcribed in the minds of Men? And as for that other

discrepance between them, that the *Moral* Law had many appendages fastened on it, which the *Natural* had not; various Rites and Ceremonies joyned to it, that were *Types* and *Symbols*, *Umbrages* and *Representations* of future things, this did not at all hinder their *Identity*; for these were meerly *Thetical* and *Circumstantial*, not at all essential to, or constitutive of, that *immutuable* Law whereunto they are annexed, which appears manifestly, in that the Law still remains intire, though these extrinsique and appendent Ordinances, be long since nulled and prescinded, by an eternal sublation.

Besides, that the *Law* of *Nature*, and the Law of *Moses*, are one and the same, as to the chief strokes and contents of them, is colligible from *Rom.* 2. 14. where the *Apostle* sayes expresly that *Nations without the Law*, φυσει τα του νομου ποιωσι, *can do by Nature the things contained in the Law*; but how could they, unless the prime duties of both were the same, and consequently the Laws themselves, as to the *substance* of them correspondent and identical? And the very next verse tells us, that they have το εργον του νομου γραπτον εν ταις καρδιαις, *The Work of the Law Written in their Hearts*, which keeps their Consciences in so wakefull and rouzed a posture, that they are able upon all occasions, to *accuse*, or *excuse* them in their doings, according to the Nature of their Actions, as the same Text assures us; and if we look back to the *first Chapter* of the same *Epistle*, and consult the *nineteenth*, *twentieth*, and one and *twentieth verses* of it, we shall find that the most important duties of the *Mosaick Law* (as the *knowing GOD, the understanding of his Eternal Power and Goodness, the Glorifying, and Praising, and Worshipping, and Serving*

Serving his Adorable Majeſty) may be executed, and in a good meaſure fulfilled by the light and energy of reaſon and Conſcience; and this ſtill evinceth a great congruency of the *Natural* and *Moſaick* Law, and mutual *ſameneſs* of both, in their moſt weighty and eſſential Requiſites.

And farther the *Law* of *Nature*, having ſo near an Affinity with the *Jewiſh*, it muſt needs claim a propinquity and alliance to the *Chriſtian* Law alſo, as indeed it does: For it is the Root and Baſis of that diſpenſation, and the Grand Argument, upon which the *New-Teſtament* is in great part, a *lucid* Paraphraſe: It is a compendious *Epitome* of thoſe momentous Doctrines, more copiouſly taught by the Holy JESUS, and the *Goſpel* it ſelf, in its firſt and imperfect Edition; ſo that being thus nearly related, both to the *Moral* Law, and *Evangelical*, it would be more abſurd, that *Heathens* by a vigilant obſervance of it, ſhould not be ſaved, than that they ſhould.

10. Now if it be here objected, that the Reaſon of moſt *Pagans* is exceeding flat and low, and that their endeavours after virtue, muſt therefore be ſo tepid, that they will hardly ever be Crowned with ſuch perfection in it, as is requiſite to make them participants of future happineſs. It will be Anſwered, let them do but what they can, and they ſhall be aſſiſted in the acquiſition of ſuch Moral excellencies, as will be rewardable with Eternal *Benedictions*: For if they ſtrive but ſincerely to extricate themſelves, from the intanglements of Sin, and ſet their faces towards Heaven, in the reſolute aggreſſions of Juſtice and Honeſty, they ſhall quickly feel their debility corroborated, and their imbecilled powers fortified by divine

Auxilia, aids and ſubſidies from above; for I doubt not but if the HOLY GHOST, who is περιλαγγάνει, and intimately acquainted with all mens diſpoſitions, once ſees theſe poor Creatures verging towards the intereſts of Piety, though never ſo little; he will immediately ſtrike in with them, confirm them in their choice, help forwad their intentions, direct them in their progreſs, and ſupply the place of *Evangelical* Precepts, Councils and admonitions to them; till they ariſe to ſuch degrees of Purity, as may qualifie them in GOD'S account to Life and Salvation: For we muſt not think that the *Spirit* of GOD, goes no farther than his *Word*, and that where the *Bible* is not Read, its *Operations* are not felt. No, that as it finds occaſion takes a larger Circuit; viſits the darkeſt Regions of the World; and many times ſallies forth in powerfull influences on the Inhabitants thereof; as well as on them that live within the precincts of the Church, and ſit under the gleams of *Goſpel* Light. Τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, *The Spirit bloweth where it liſteth*; and if it meets with the leaſt ſpark of genuine Goodneſs, though raked up in never ſo many Aſhes of *Pagan* corruptions, it will do what in reaſon can be deſired, to ventilate and Fan it into a burning flame: What the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom* (*Philo* as ſome believe) excellently delivers of the HOLY GHOST, does moſt appoſitely quadrate with him; namely, *That he is ready to do Good, kind to Man, and in all ages entring into Holy Souls, maketh them Friends of GOD.* He is not bound to *time* or *place*, or any ſuch like Circumſtance; but with a free and unconfined liberty, rangeth through all *times* and *Countreys*, and where he lights on any that are ſuſceptible of them, he Seals them

Wiſd 7. 22. 23. 27.

them with divine impreſſes, and by his mighty Bleſſing ſecundates their purſuits of Virtue in this preſent life, and conſigns them to the fruition of a better: So that grant the *Light* of *Nature*, which blinketh in the common *Heathens*, be *dim* and *luridous*; and that the exertions of their *innate* Reaſon, be faint and flaccid; yet being actuated by the HOLY GHOST, and cheriſht with his potent and benign Workings, they may thus wax bright and vigorous, and be able to exalt them to ſuch a pitch of Goodneſs, as will carry them to Immortality.

Thus is *Providence* abundantly juſtified in her dealings with the *Heathen*, and fairly vindicated from all calumniative *obloquies*, and juſt ſuſpicions of tyranny and crudelity to their Souls, for placing them in ſo ſad a conſtitution of things: For though they be ſurrounded with multifarious difficulties, and every where begirt with huge incumbrances; yet GOD hath fixed ſuch principles in them, that if they be true and faithfull to them, by the *adjument* of the SPIRIT, they may emerge victoriouſly through them all, and maugre the ſtrongeſt impediments in their way, aſcend to *Glory* and *Beatitude*.

11. But if it be too venturous and temerarious a dogmatizing, to vouch the Salvation of *Heathens* poſſible, without an *explicit* Knowledge of a *Mediator*, and the Holy *Goſpel* (as I am forward to yield it is, if it ſhall be ſo ſenſed by the judicious) then we may wave that, as a loud conjecture, and without offence conclude them capable of felicity, upon another *Hypotheſis*; that is, the morigerous of them, and ſuch as are truly obſequious to the commands of their inward Reaſon; for if their impotence be ſo great, that they cannot

cannot though aided by the ordinary concurrence of the HOLY GHOST (whose officious Goodness is ready to countenance the most frigid offers at Vertue, and promote the sicklieſt endeavours after it) acquire such eminent portions of integrity, as may hallow their persons (through the meritorious Cross of JESUS) to an admission into Heaven: Then we may lawfully beleive, that they shall be tenderly regarded of the Saviour of the World; and if they keep their pullulating Vertues, in a florid and thriving condition, shall themselves at length be transplanted into a nobler Soil, where those hopefull *germinations*, that begin to bud and sprout within them, being seasonably irrigated with the *fœcundant* showers, and kindly fostered with the *benign* influence of the Gospel, shall thereby ripen into high perfections, and the Graces of *Christianity*. Then GOD whose Providence superintends the World, and whose mercy hovers over the whole Creation, gently brooding it with indulgent Wings; *who is Good, and does Good, and ever waiteth to be Gracious*; will lovingly watch over their teeming Souls, and not suffer the injected seeds of Goodness, to starve in the Womb of their conception, for lack of knowledge to feed and nourish them; but by means usual or extraordinary, will reduce them within the sound of his Word, and afford them so full an insight and erudition in *Evangelical* Mysteries, as shall minister effectually to their progress in Religion, and advance them to such measures of *Sanctity* and *Righteousness*, as shall avail to their Eternal glorification, and together with the Key of CHRIST'S precious merits, open unto them the Gates of *Paradise*.

12. And this much the *Assertors* of *Præexistence*, are from

from their own principles bound to concede, that the *Heathen* in the condition they are in, are capable of Salvation: For they perſwade that GOD'S ſending them down into this *Terreſtrial* Life, is an inſtance of his ſingular kindneſs to them (to uſe their own Language;) *an after Game of divine Goodneſs; and a Lux ent. C mercy*: But wherein lies this Goodneſs, or conſiſts this mercy, unleſs it be in that they are here made *Candidates*, and *Probationers* for their loſt Felicity, and put in a poſſibility of regaining it? And if it be poſſible for them in the caſe they are in, to attain happineſs in the Life to come; we need no other *Key* to unlock the Methods of *Providence* to them, than this Doctrine; for it clears it from all acceſſoiines to their ruine, and if they miſcarry in the future State, it transfers their deſtruction upon themſelves, and brands them for the procurers of their own miſchief. And thus the high pretended uſefulneſs, of the *Origenian* Hypotheſis, to explicate the recondit myſteries of *Providence*, in relation to the *Heathens* Miſery, is by its own *Abettors* moſt unluckily over-turned, and the Opinion rendered quite ſuperfluous, as to that great work, for the tranſaction of which they hold it ſo very neceſſary: For if they once grant that the *Heathen* are in a capacity of aſpiring to *Cæleſtial* Bliſs (which they cannot deny, ſuppoſing this Life a mercy to them) then without any farther ado, the miſery of *Pagans* in their want of the Goſpel, and the equity of *Providence* in ſuffering this their miſery, will from hence be made conſiſtent, and reconcileable enough; though *Præexiſtence* had never been excogitated, or were eternally exploded. The *Circumſtances* they are in, are extreamly ſad, but ſo long as GOD has not præcluded to them the

the way to Heaven, his bounty towards them is Illustrious, and we need not fetch in *Præexistence*, to justifie his dealings with them. If he be accused as guilty of injuring them, we have evidence enough to prove him innocent, without suborning so false a Witness; I mean in that Court, where unfeigned *Piety* sits as Judge, and solid reason is of the *Jury*.

CHAP. IV.

1. *A Third Argument for* Præexistence, *fetcht from its trim* solution *of that knotty* Theological Problem; *the* Disperſion *of* Original *Sin through the whole Stock of* Mankind. 2. *That this is sufficiently intelligible without that* Hypothesis. 3. *A succinct description of* Adams *Paradisiacal happiness.* 4. *And the evill consequents of his* Apostasie. 5. *The seat and vehicle of* Original *Sin to his Posterity, may be only the* depraved Bodies, *they draw from him since his defection.* 6. *That this Supposal granted, the manner of its* Universal diffusion *is very conceivable.* 7. *That the uniting of Souls to these contaminant Bodies, does not intrench at all upon GOD'S* Justice. 8. *An* objection *touching our notion*

notion of Original Sin, Answered. 9. *A brief recapitulation of the* Principals *of the Chapter.*

1. THE former Argument respected mans misery, this next relateth to his Sin; but is of a far larger extent and more comprehensive Latitude. For whereas the other pointed only at the *Heathen*; this referreth to the World collectively. And thus it runs;

That *Præexistence* is the only expedient, to unriddle the traduction of *Original* Sin, or rather the commune and epidemick contagion thereof: For thus, every one will be made the Author of his own *primordial* Guilt; and we need not have recourse to GOD'S Transactions with the person of *Adam*, and so run into a maze or *Labyrinth* of difficulties, out of which their is no extrication: Then we need not puzzle and perplex our selves, about the secret and imperscrutable mode of its devolution upon us; nor make any presumptuous reflections on the Attribute of GOD'S *Justice*, for plunging *immaculate* Spirits into defiling Bodies; who did not in the least concur with *Adam* in his foul offence, nor any way consent to the perpetration of it, they not so much as potentially existing in him, at the time of his revolt. I Reply; *Arg.* 3.

2. That this is one way to expound that *Mystick* Head in Divinity, it will freely be acknowledged: But to pronounce it the sole means of its *enodation*, is too elated and *Thrasonick*, a glorying in the *Hypothesis*, and savours as much of *Falshood*, as *Arrogance*: For I doubt not but a very full, and plausible account of that arduous point, neither too difficil to be understood, nor diminutive of GOD'S most perfect *Justice*, is as inferrible from other principles, as from this; and *Confut.*

to propose such a solution of that abstruse mystery, the propagation of *Original* guilt, as is free from the objected criminations, of too great *difficulty* and *derogation* from the Divine *Equity*, shall be my next endeavour.

3. And that we may tread on the surer grounds in doing it, it will not be amiss to fetch a little the larger circuit, and cursorily to traverse the Felicity of *Adam*, in his state of innocence.

The *Great* and *High* JEHOVAH then, being infinitely perfect, and so *perfectly* Blessed in himself; though he could not thereby gain any *new* accession, to his own *intrinsique* happiness; yet to demonstrate his Wisdom and Power, and to make himself receptacles of his *boundless Goodness*, which is ever prone to Benefactions; *He* resolved to Create several sorts of *Beings*, and to bless them with the Communications of his *Paternal* Bounty, according to their respective capacities. Hereupon he first of all produced, an *immense* moles of corporeal substance; which in the beginning, was one dark and confused *Chaos*: but being reduced into that *Elegant* and *Concumous* order in which now it stands, it became that goodly Fabrick call'd the *World*; which was no sooner reared, but the skilfull *Architect* that fram'd it, took care to furnish and adorn it with *Inhabitants*, and to *fute* their Natures to the *qualities* of their provided Mansions. Thus because the *Heavens*, or *supernal* Regions, are fraught with nothing but GOD'S own presence, and a *Spiritual*, or *Tenuious* substance; he stored them with *Angels*, and *Intelectual* Powers, the *Fines* of whose Essence perhaps, abhors all *vital* Union with the purest matter. The *Lower* World, I mean the

Erratick

Erratick Globe we live on, as being a lump of courſe and droſſie *Corporeity*, he ſtockt with various *Animals*, whoſe craſs and ruder conſtitutions, *ſymbolized* with the *Elements* of their appointed Reſidence. Thus, *Fiſh* were fitted for the Waters: *Fowls* and *Beaſts*, &c. for the upper *Cortex* of the Earth, and *ambient* Air: Nor were the *Interior* Regions of our *Planet*, left a naked Deſolation, but perhaps were peopled with their proper *Incolæ*, and had their cloſe *Receſſes*, ſilent *Vaults* and hollow *Caverns*, garniſht with ſuch *Beings*, as love thoſe Nightſom *Cells*, and ſubterraneous *Dwellings*.

This done, he took in hand the *efformation* of Man, a Curious and moſt Noble piece of *Workmanſhip*. For him, he made the *lively* Tranſcript of himſelf, *Characterizing* his Perſon with the *Image* of his Deity: Which though it conſiſted mainly, in the *rectitude* and *Integrity* of his mind, yet ſome obſcurer *Lineaments* of it, were conſpicuous in the *immaterial* and *Immortal* Nature of his Soul; his rational and lofty faculties, and Dominion over his *Fellow* Creatures. For that he might bear the more exact *ſimilitude*, and juſt *reſemblance* of himſelf, GOD ſet him on a ſplendent *Throne*, and rais'd him to a kind of *Royal Supremacy*, over all the *Beſtial* Communities: Who, ſo long as he held his *Primative* Station, were Faithfull in their due *Allegiance* to him, and greatly delighted to admire, and ſerve their deputed *Lord* and *Emperour*: Nor indeed could they *ſhift* it; for ſuch a placid refulgency ſat upon his Countenance, and ſuch *ſparkling* and *perſtringent* beams of Majeſty ſallied from his Eyes, that every *Look* he caſt upon them, darted wonder into their Souls; awed them down to reverential proſtrations,

and extorted from them, *tacit* significations of their subjection to him: Nor had he more command, or less obedience *without*, than he had *within* himself: For then his Body was wholly swayed by the *Empire* of his mind, and naturally conspired with its regular and unerring motions: His *Nerves* abounded with *Agil* Spirits, and his turgid *Veins* with well concocted Blood: His *Heat* was soft and gentle; and his *Ferments* smooth and unctuous; and all his *Members* vegete and lively; ready prest for the service of his Will, and free to execute the *Mandates* of it, without the least check, or contranitency to the same.

And that his *Habitation*, might correspond to the dignity of his Person, he was seated in *Paradise*, a Promptuary of rich Felicities; a place confert and crowded full with innocent oblectations, and beset on all sides with such high contentments, that nothing but Heaven could be like it. Where besides the luscious gratifications, of his chast and wary senses, which he plentifully imbibed; he swam in *Torrents* of Diviner Joyes, that frankely flowed from the indulgence of his *Maker*: For ever and anon he was taken up into familiar converse with him, and saw his Glorious presence under some *visible Form* or other; the frequent sight and vived sense of which, threw him into such gratefull *Extasies*, and so transported his enravisht Soul, with *Sentiments* of *Angelick* pleasure, vigorous emotions of mind, and strong *Aspires* of *Seraphick* Love, as almost to heave her out of her new espoused Body. And though he was not alwayes actuated with these *pathetick* Raptures, yet he had wherewith to stave off *dumpish* Stupors, and to keep himself in a Triumphant posture; for when the *Paroxisms* of de-

light

light were over, and the *Tide* of Conſolations at an Ebb; yet the memory of them ſo lately paſt, and the lively hopes of their ſpeedy returne, could not but cauſe the *leſſer* Springs of Joy, to riſe and bubble in his Soul, and to continue gurgling through his heart, till freſh approaches of the *Shechinah* pull'd up the Sluce again, and delug'd him with *new*, and happy inundations. Thus tranſcendently Bleſſed was the *Protoplaſt*, when he firſt dropt out of his Creators hands: But he ſtood not long in this condition; the *Scæne* was quickly changed, and the Garland of Felicity that adorn'd his *temples*, inſtead of proving immarceſcible, withered in a moment: How it came to do ſo I muſt next relate, together with the evill and deplorable circumſtances of his great Misfortune.

4. What a rare and incomparable ſtate of *Life*, the *firſt* man was honoured with, I have briefly hinted; and if he had but perſiſted in a due conformity to the Will of GOD, and cautelouſly ſhunned all *ſiniſter* declenſions from his Righteous *Laws*; he ſhould thereby have enſured to himſelf, and entailed on his Poſterity, a continuation of thoſe high prerogatives, which he injoyed: And how really deſirous GOD was of this, that *Adam* ſhould have held his *firſt* ſtation, and ſo have conveyed down the Priviledges of it, to ſuccedent Generations; is plain, in that he did not only indue him with ſufficient ſtrengths, to diſcharge his incumbent duties; but to make him vigilant in acting of them; ſeverely threatned, that if he failed in his obedience, he ſhould *ſurely Dye*, *Gen.* 2. 17. But he indiſcreetly ſlighting the denounced *menaces*, raſhly complyed with the *Serpents* ſuggeſtions, and notwithſtanding the expreſs interdiction of ALMIGHTY GOD,

GOD, prævaricated his *Holy* Sanctions, inadviſedly ruſhing on the inſtances of diſloyalty: But his delinquencies coſt him dear; for thereby he incurred the forfeiture of all his happineſs, and being made obnoxious to the *minatory* Sentence, died in moſt of his capacities. And that he did not dye *Eternally*, is to be Attributed to Heavens pity, which interpoſed between him and Hell, and ſnatcht the unworthy ſinner from ſo dire a miſery: But that which muſt be noted, as moſt pertinent to our purpoſe is, that his *Fall* was very deſtructive to his *Body*; that it changed the Temperature, corrupted the Habit, and mightily perverted the conſtitution of it: So that whereas, before it was of a flexible and yeilding nature, and ſequacious to the dictates of his unſpotted mind; cool and calm, and entirely ſubject unto reaſons conduct; he had no ſooner tranſgreſt the *lines* of Innocence, by unluckie combination with the Devil, but he found himſelf in another World: For preſently unbridled paſſion, uſurpt the Throne of his depoſed Underſtanding, caſt off its Empire, and diſſeiz'd it of its juſt Dominion; turbulent affections tyranniz'd over his impotent Spirit; and brutiſh deſires, impatient of Controll, hurried him on to unlawfull objects, with moſt præcipitant and fierce *impetuoſity*; his *proclivities* to Vice were made well nigh inſuperable; and his *Antipathies* to Virtue ſo ſtrong and deadly, that he could never buckle to the practice of it, but by aſſiduous conflicts with his reluctant fleſh, and frequent repetitions of moſt ſharp *Pſycomachies*: In a word, when he ſinned, he came under the power of a raging Principle, whoſe fury as yet he never felt: Then *petulant* Senſe, which before kept under *Hatches*, and lay

lay bound in Fetters of a due reſtraint, brake looſe and perkt aloft; and clambering into the *Acropolis* of his Soul, could make a ſhift to fool and baffle his nobler faculties, and to tempt him on to ſad *attaxies* and *miſcarriages*: So that whereas before he might vie *Beatitude* with the Angels, as being their *Younger* Brother, and near allied to their exalted Race and *Hierarchie*; by infringing Heavens Statutes, he degenerated from his high perfections, and through his own præpoſterous folly, became a Companion of the Beaſts that periſh; was linked to a ſenſual noiſom Carcaſs, and made a Stage for *Wanton* appetites, and baſe carnality to act upon, as well as they.

5. And thus perhaps we have diſcovered what is that true *Vehiculum*, and general Channel, which ſo faithfully derives the impure ſtream of *Original guilt*, to every Child of rebellious *Adam*; namely diſtempered, unweildy, and prædominant Bodies, which he propagated to them; for he having by his curſed *Anomies*, depraved his own *Craſis*, and being unable to tranſmit purer Bodies to his *Iſſue*, than he had himſelf; they receiving from him groſs and fæculent ones, from their very firſt unition to them, were inevitably tinctured with naughty propenſions, and a vile Concupiſence; and that the Body infects the Soul with. *Original Sin*, the CHURCH of *England* plainly declares; for ſhe calls it φρόνημα σαρκὸς, which according to thoſe reditions of the Word, that ſhe ſets down; ſignifies the *ſenſuality*, *affection*, *and deſire of the Fleſh*; and clearly intimates, that ſhe looks upon thoſe vehement luſtings, and filthy inclinations, that conſtitute *Original Sin*, as accruing to us from our concrete *Fleſh*, which ſinks and weighs us down, and irreſiſtibly hurries. *Artic.* 9.

hurries us away into those obliquities: And that these *putid* Dungeons which we dwell in, should thus strongly influence our Souls, as to infect them with the aforesaid guilt, is not strange at all; for if we consult our own experience, and mark how exactly our minds conform and answer to our Bodies, and change and vary with the same; and how much the distemper of the one, indisposeth the other, affecting it with *dulness*, *frowardness*, *phrenzie*, &c. according to the nature of the *regnant* malignity; we cannot but confess, that the result of our Souls so *intimate* Union with these *Trunks* of Flesh, disordered grievously by the *first* Mans intemperance; may very well be an *excessive* Love to sensibles, and rank disgust of inward *Purity*, which two *Evils* integrate the Nature of *Original Sin*.

6. And allowing this, to be a genuine *Notion* of it, which I have proposed; *viz.* That it is a discomposure of the Soul; a debilitation and deordination of her faculties, proceeding from that rude *inert*, and ungovernable Body, to which she is *vitally* United; it may easily be deprehended, how the *Guilt* of it should become so *Catholique* as it is; and so generally descendent upon every Man: For *Adam* by his *prævarication*, having brought down the Curse of Heaven upon his Head, it wrought a *dismal* mutation in his Body, which made it stout and refractory, stubborn and Rebellious; and apt not only to hinder the *Spirit* in its motion upward, and retard it in doing what GOD requires; but also to press it down-ward with a *mighty* degravation, and to stimulate and spur it on, to *Lawless* disconformities, to the *Heavenly* Will: And he being the *commune* source, and Parent of Mankind, from whom our Bodies by way of *Generation*, were all

all derived; they muſt needs be of the ſame *enormous* temper with his own; and conſequently productive of the like ſinfull exorbitancies in our Souls, immediately upon their *Syzygie*, or conjunction; ſo that hence it is apparent enough, how our Nature came to be *poiſoned* with ſuch head-ſtrong proclivities, to ſenſual turpitude, and to affect ſuch wide *eccentricities* to real Goodneſs; or which is all one, how we came to be beſmeard with *Original Sin*: It was not done by any cryptick tranſmiſſion, or unintelligible diſſemination of it from *Adam's* Soul, as ſome would have it; for then his *Virtues*, might as well have been tranſfuſed into us, as his *Sin*; a good habit being as apt to migrate from the *Father* to the *Children*, as an evill one: Nor by any *fatal Decree* transferring it upon us, by imputation; for *Original Sin* is not only an imputative, but a Phyſical and inherent thing, radicated and grounded in us; *a Fault, Corruption, and infection of our Nature*, as our *Church* hath ſolidly defined it: But it ſprings from the Souls copulation, with this lumpiſh *fœtid* Body; which clogs her with a drowzy indiſpoſition to Goodneſs, and alienating her mind, from the proper objects of her *maſculine* faculties, draws her down into a ſlaviſh affectation of, and vigorous egreſſion after animal delights, which we name Concupiſcence. Artic. 9.

Nor need we wonder (as I ſaid before) that our noiſom Bodies, ſhould ſo far over-power the indwelling Souls, as to determine them into ſinfull motions, and to ſtain them with ſuch an early guilt: For ſuch a potent agency have theſe muddy Priſons, on the Spirits immured in them; and with ſo ſtrange a ſympathy, do they bewitch and charm them into compli-

ance with ſordid and ignoble intereſts; that I am ready to believe; if Bleſſed *Angels*, Creatures of an higher order than our ſelves (though ſome deny it) were incarcerated in them after the ſame manner that we are; they would be as deeply conſcious of thoſe innate pravities called *Original Sin*, as any of us all: I, and perhaps of actual impieties too, ſuppoſing they could forget their paſt felicities, and have their apprehenſions of the other life, contracted into the narrowneſs of ours: For then were they to act in theſe cadaverous Bodies; I doubt not but external objects, and the doloſe baits of Sin, would be as cogent illectives of their paſſions, as now they are of ours; and playing briſkly upon their Spirits, through the meditation of their fleſhly Organs, would Lord it over their intelligent part; and hazard with an high and domineering hand, to carry them Captive in the Chains of ſenſe, unleſs they were extreamly vigilant. But this is an excurſion; I therefore ſtop it, and return.

7. Now if it be here demanded, how it comports with the Juſtice of the GOD-HEAD, to immerſe pure and upright Creatures, into ſuch brutiſh and polluting vehicles, where they muſt neceſſarily be touched with Concupiſcence, and tied up to conſtant bickerings and colluctations with raging luſts, and violent paſſions? To the *Quæry* I ſhape out this Anſwer. Suppoſing GOD had created all men at once, and they had all exiſted at the ſame time with *Adam*; if then they had voluntarily lapſed together, and of their own accord, had ſlid down into the evill circumſtances, and annoyances of their preſent ſtate; GOD'S Juſtice ſhould then have been acquitted by all, and every mouth would have proclaimed him innocent

nocent of their miſery; nor is he more guilty of it now: For he clearly foreſaw, that if he had brought them all into Being at once, and ſet them down in the ſame happy condition with *Adam*; they would all have fallen from it, as he did (and his evill Fate may ſerve as one good Argument to convince us of as much) and foreſeeing this, he did not make them *coætaneous* with *Adam* (for all the Generations of Men, could not have ſubſiſted on the Earth at once) but choſe rather to create their Souls by *piece-meal*, and to let them derive their Bodies from him; that ſo they might live here ſucceſſively one after another, in the ſame condition, into which they would infallibly have thrown themſelves, if they had been *Adams* Contemporaries; ſo that the connexion of ſpotleſs Souls, with theſe foul and polluent Bodies, is no whit repugnant to divine *Juſtice*; for GOD herein did but inflict that calamity upon them, which if he had created them in a better ſtate, and given them liberty of Election, would aſſuredly have been the Fruit of their *own choice*.

So that inſtead of reputing it an injury, we have reaſon to ſenſe it as a ſpecial kindneſs of GOD, that he was pleaſed to take an occaſion from *Adams* diſobedience, to Cloath us primarily with theſe collapſed, and ruinous Bodies: For if we had inchoated our lives in vehicles of a finer compoſition, and afterwards had vitiated, and diſpoiled them by Sin, like our firſt Progenitor, as moſt certainly we ſhould; this would have expoſed us to great inconveniencies, which are now prevented: For then in the *Firſt* place, our Manſion in embaſed and diſcompoſed Bodies, we being once joyned unto better; would have been ex-

ceedingly more troubleſome and uneaſy, than now it is: As it is moſt grievous to ſuch as have reſided in ſtately Palaces, to be confined to naſty Cottages: And moſt intolerable to delicate livers, to come under the preſſures, and pungent aſperities of anguſt fortunes, and adverſe contingencies. And again it would have aggravated, and ingrandized our *Original Sin*, and rendered it obnoxious to the ſevereſt penances; whereas by this means it is extenuated, and made leſs puniſhable and flagitious; for we receiving the guilt of it at ſecond hand, by derivation from our *Repreſentative*, it muſt needs be leſs hainous, than if it had been contracted by perſonal curvities, and malicious declenſions from the Rules of *Sanctity*, into which we ſhould undoubtedly have ſwerved: And ſince we have both leſs Sin, and leſs Puniſhment, by our conjugation with theſe vile Ὀχήματα, than would have redounded to us, if we had been united to Bodies more defæcate; GOD is not ſo *unjuſt*, as *meroiful* in the Diſpenſation.

8. I ſhould here have put an end to this Chapter, but that a pert objection tuggs me by the ſleeve, and will not be pacified without an Anſwer. It expreſſeth it ſelf in theſe terms: If what I preſume of *Original Sin*, be true concerning it; namely that it reſults immediately, from the *conjunction of the Soul with a carnal Body*; then how could CHRIST evade the pollution of it, and ſtand (as it is certain he did) in a compleat immunity from it?

To this I reply firſt, that his Body ('tis like) was of a more ſedate and caſtigate temper, and came a great deal nearer the pure *Adamical* Craſis, than ours; and upon this Hypotheſis, he might remain free from the

the vile deformities of *Original Sin*, neceſſarily imprinted on our Souls, the *Sanguine*, *Cholerick*, *Phlegmatick*, and *Melancholy* Principles, whoſe uneven mixtures and complications in us, diſpoſe us to vice, and betray us to diſorder, met in his complexion in juſt proportions; and an equilibrious ponderancy; ſo that he felt not the inconveniencies of their inteſtine ſtruglings, and pugnacious dimications, nor of the tyrannical puiſſance of one above the reſt; for being fitly tempered, they ſubſided peacably within him, and dwelt together in an amicable concord; and though he could evocate them as he liſted, to the miniſtry of their proper functions, and cauſe them as he pleaſed; to ſerve the ends of Godlineſs, and purpoſes of the Spirit; yet they never offered to break forth into vile and brutiſh diſplaies of themſelves, or to ſhoot up into any unhandſom and peccant effloreſcencies; ſo that though the Holy JESUS had ſuch a concupiſcence planted in him, as is connatural to humanity, and alwayes grows up in an inſeparable coalition with it (ſuch as *Adam* had in the ſtate of his Innocence) yet he might be far enough from all uncomely deſires and appetites, ſinful and exorbitant.

Or if this be not enough; I may farther add, that he was Θεάνθρωπος, GOD as well as Man: That he was united to the ſecond Hypoſtaſis of the *Triune* Deity; and thereby became of ſo extraordinary and ſublimated an Holineſs, that though his ſuſcepted Body were of the ſame conſtitution with ours, yet he could very well extinguiſh, and ſubdue thoſe pernicious inordinacies of it, from whence *Original* Corruptions flow; and with as much eaſe by his ſuperlative and prevailing ſanctity, work a thorow ſubaction and compeſ-

compeſcation of them, to keep his Soul from Sin; as he could by his Power, *Metamorphoſe* the Figuration of his Viſage, to ſave his Perſon from violence.

9. The ſum of all is this; *Adam* ſo long as he was Innocent, was incomparably happy; but when he ſinned his Fall ſuperinduced a miſerable alteration on his Body: And whereas before it was of a delicate, even, and commendable temper, it made it cumberſome and unruly, and ſadly procreative of tumultuous motions, protervous paſſions, turbulent affections, and vagrant deſires in his Spirit; from his Loins iſſued our Bodies, which being made of *Adams*, were of the ſame degenerate nature with it; and conſequently occaſioned the like irregularities, and fatal tendencies to *illicit* things in our Souls, as ſoon as they were infuſed into them, which are truly and properly *Original Sin:* And thus the method or way of its wide diffuſion, and *œcumenick* contagion (without the help of *Præexiſtence* to evolve and unravel the difficulties of it) is rendred obvious and explicit, and that without any rude and indecorous juſtling, with GOD'S inviolable *Equity*; for admitting crazed Bodies, to be the Seat and deferent of them (*i. e.* of thoſe virulent influences which provoke and kindle them) it is as eaſy to underſtand, how untoward Paſſions, and anomalous diſpoſitions, ſhould be traduced from *Adam* to his Sons, as it is to conceive how morbifick qualities, ſhould paſs from *Anceſtors* to *Poſterity*, and any diſtemper prove *Hæreditary*. If therefore there be no farther uſe to be made of the *Hypotheſis*, than intelligibly to enucleate this perplexed circumſtance, the epidemick and unbounded vagation of *Original Guilt*, through the Souls of Men, and to facilitate the explanation of

of it; we need not adopt it into the *Articles* of our Faith, nor rank it amongſt the indiſpenſable *Credenda* of our Religion.

CHAP. V.

1. *The Fourth Argument for Præexiſtence, from Mens various* Inclinations. 2. *That theſe cannot proceed from any tinctures, imbibed in a* Former Life; *for two Reaſons.* 3. *But are advenient from the* Body, Cuſtome, *or* Education. 4. *Or it may be from an occult and inobſerved* Principle, *which is ſafe to Conclude.*

1. I Paſs now to another Argument, whereby the Favourers of Præexiſtence, would legitimate their Phanſie, and Court us into a credit of their Hypotheſis: It is raiſed from the *variety of humane Diſpoſitions*, in reference to Speculations and ingenuous Practices; and is ſet down to this ſenſe. That Mens *inward* complexions, are as diſcolor as their *outward*; and the Craſis of their Minds, as multiform, as thoſe of their Bodies; that as their are Ἰδιογκρισίαι σωμάτων, or *radical* Tempers, proper to their Corporal parts; ſo their are *Mental* and *Animary* Propenſions, congenite with their Soûls, wherewithall they deſcend Sealed and impregnated into the World. Thus it is eaſy to note, that ſome Men are ſtrangely *Arg.*

ſtrangely prone to ſome opinions; that they haſtily graſp and catch at them, and greedily flie and faſten on them, at their very firſt Propoſal: Whereas on the contrary; others, every whit as Learned as they; of as nimble parts, and ſolid Judgments, and ſpritely apprehenſions, *hæſitate* and boggle at them; and though they be ſtated to them with an equal clearneſs, and backt with the ſame convincing evidences, yet they can by no means approve and reliſh them, but are utterly and incurably ſet againſt them, and their averſneſs to them ſeems to be complicated and woven into the very frame and contexture of their Natures. Now from whence ſprings this intellectual Congruity to ſome *Dogmata*, and *coyneſs* and *antipathy* to others, unleſs their Souls *Præexiſted*, and ſo ſlid down into this ſtate; præpoſſeſſed with intire affections to ſome Principles, and an ingrafted *odium* unto others?

And the like is obſervable of the *Geniuſſes* of Men; that they eagerly propend to peculiar imployments, and are ſtrongly vergent to particular exerciſes; of which native determinations, and congenerous tendencies, no tollerable Accompt can be given; but that their Souls trod another Stage, before they appeared on this, and were there addicted to ſome kind of Tranſactions, analogous to theſe which they here affect; and being much delighted with, and long habituated to them then, they ſtill retain ſome little touches, ſtrictures, and reliques of them; and as their Reaſon and Faculties, mature and ripen, are here awakened into a freſh choice, renewed Love, and poſtlimineous recovery of them.

nſut. 2. But againſt theſe confident allegations it may be conſidered;

conſidered; Firſt, how the fore-mentioned propenſities are not *Univerſal*, and blended with the conſtitution of *every* Perſon; but are thin ſown and grow up ſparſedly, here and there a *few*, and as for the Generalitie of People, they are ſtrangers to them, and feel nothing of their ſtrength and prævalence: For where there are *five* naturally bent to any one kind of Craft, and remarkably taken with any ſpecial Notions; there are as many *Millions* that are free to all, indifferent to the reception of any, that are firſt and upon beſt grounds recommended to them; and this ſeems to null and evacuate the foregoing Ratiocinations, which at firſt view appeared ſo nervous and forcible: For if ſome deſcend into this life, bigg with aptneſſes and proclivities to peculiar Arts and Theories; why then ſhould not all (ſuppoſing they Præexiſted together) do the like? For then they could not but be devoted every one, to ſome certain ſpeculations and imployments in that condition; and theſe having gained there affections there, their Souls ſhould be ſtamped with permanent aptitudes to them, and as ſoon as they are capable of it upon Earth, ſhould alwayes break out into vehement proneſſes, and delightfull eſſayes to thoſe Opinions and undertakings, which are moſt conſimilous and proportionate, to ſuch as they were Ancient admirers, and Practitioners of: But common experience proves it is otherwiſe, and well aſſures us that very *few* have a natural, and ingenite kindneſs, for one Notion or Exerciſe above another; but are alike prompt to all, and can cloſe affectionately with *this*, or *that*, or any that comes next, and ſollicits their complyance upon faireſt terms, and moſt rational accompts; which makes me ſtrongly

ſurmiſe, that mens ſpontaneous forwardneſſes, and complacent leanings to determinate Objects, in this preſent ſtate, are not reviviſcencies, of any Prediſpoſitions they had to analogous inſtances in a former; for then they would not be ſo *rare* and *infrequent* as they are; but *all* as well as *ſome*, would phanſie peculiar Notions and Profeſſions, and we ſhould ſee every one by nature inclining to ſuch Theories and Practices, as are moſt agreeable to thoſe they were heretofore inured to.

But then again, there are ſeveral things here below, which the *Geniuſſes* of men purſue and follow with the hotteſt chaſe, that can have nothing in the upper Regions to typifie or reſemble them, in the leaſt ſhadow of anologie; as *Planting*, *Building*, *Husbandry*, the *working of Manufactures*, &c. Thouſands drink in the Love of theſe, together with their Parents milk, and are enamoured on them from their very Cradles; yet I am ſure the affectations of theſe Arts, cannot be derived from *Præexiſtence*; they cannot poſſibly be any new expergefactions of dormient propenſions, or refloreſcencies of obſolete and forgotten Cuſtoms, contracted in a ſuperior life; becauſe there is nothing parallel to them above, about which *Præexiſtent* Spirits could be buſied: For who is ſo phrantick or fooliſh, as to dream *Gardening*, *Brick-laying* *Agriculture*, *Weaving*, &c. Or any callings like them, to be in faſhion in the *Cœleſtial* Countries? And if Men may have natural deſires, and radicated inclinations to thoſe exerciſes, which they could not take any cognoſcence of, nor of any thing anſwerable to them, in the ſtate of *Præexiſtence*; it is plain that all the propenſities originally planted in them, were not brought

brought from thence: And if not all, what neceſſity of granting that any were? (For where ſome took their Riſe, the reſt might do ſo too) and if none were drawn from thence, then he that goes about to prove *Præexiſtence*, by this variety of Humane inclinations, argues from a falſe *Topick*, and his Reaſonings are ill applyed.

3. But when I diſprove one, it will be expected, that I ſhould aſſign another cauſe of theſe pretty effects, and point out ſomething elſe as a likely Principle, to give Life and Being to them: And methinks none ſtands ſo fair for this office as the *Body*, whoſe influence muſt queſtionleſs have a great ſtroke, in the cauſation of theſe diſſimulous propenſities; that it can produce effects cognate and equivalent to theſe, and ſo probably theſe alſo, is moſt apparent.

From whence ſprings the odd diverſitie of Mens *Palates* and *Appetites*? This Mans meat (as the *Diverb* runs) is another Mans poiſon; that which I love and reliſh with the higheſt guſt, my Companion perfectly abhors, and cannot indure to put it in his mouth, nor may be to touch it with his fingers: And again, what he deemeth moſt delicious, is to me as odious; and the very thought of his appetitious Diſh, cloggs my ſtomach with a *nauſea*, and provokes to ſqueamiſhneſs and loathings; that which the Father dotes on, the Son abominates; and what the Maſter accompts moſt pure *Ambroſia*, the Servant heartily deteſts; and it moves no more longings in him, than if it were a Meſs of condited *Night-Shade*, or a Cup of lethiferous *Aconite*.

Whence come our different Judgments in *Hearing*? That which is raviſhing melody to me, is an ugly

noiſe, and offenſive grating to him that ſtands next; and what my Friend eſteems the moſt exquiſite and delightfull Harmony, moves me to nothing but diſtaſt and anger: With what raiſed paſſion, and attentive wonder, do ſome receive thoſe deſpicable ſounds, of which diſdain makes others heedleſs, and ſtops their Ears with deafneſs to them? So have I known ſome, liſten to the wild modulations of the *Canorous Thruſh*, as if he chaunted *Anthems*; and cry up garrulous *Progne*, Summers Pediſſequent, for a perfect *Siren*: Others I have ſeen admire the coactions of ſallacious *Frogs*; and applaud the inharmonious rehearſals of the one-ton'd *Cuckow*, as well compoſed conſorts: Some envy the *Crane* for his harſh vociferations, more than *Philoxenus* did for his extended Neck; and others marvell as much, at the ſcurvy Hollowings of the Weak-ey'd *Owl*, as the *Birds* do at her mopiſh Viſage, when ſhe peeps abroad by Day-light: Some prefer the inauſpicious crocitations of the raucous *Night-Raven*, before ſweet-noted *Philomela's* Muſick, and the pleaſanteſt Ditties of the winged *Choriſters*; and others had rather attend to the ruefull yawlings of *Juno's* Bird, prinkt up with varicolour gayeties, the ſpoils of drowzie *Argus*; than the farewell Tunes of the ſolitary *Swan*, when ſitting on his watry Hearſe, he Sings his own *Dirge's*: Some again value the *Bagpipe-Drone*, above the Altiſonous *Organ*, and others had as live hear the doleſome threnes of departing *Clinicks*, or piteous out-Cries of vagient *Infants*, as a Leſſon on the *Lute* or *Dulcimer*. But not to be tedious; that which to one Mans hearing is Pleaſant, to anothers is intollerable.

And the like may be ſaid of the reſt of the *Senſes*: Some

Some hate the moſt *Aromatick* Odours, as much as the *Fumigations* of the Death-Bed: Others have had their Skins bliſtered with the touch of a *Roſe*, as if it had been a Plaiſter of *Cantharides*: And others again have ſwooned at the ſight of wholſome *Diet*; and that which ſhould have releiv'd their *Spirits*, has afflicted them with a *Syncope*.

Now what is the cauſe I ſay, that we affect theſe things ſo diverſly (our Souls being all alike) but only that our *Bodies* differing a little in their reſpective Craſeis or Compoſures, ſtrangely vary our *Senſations*? And if the *Body* can thus cauſe us, to *Love*, and *Diſlike* Senſibles; why not as well to *Approve*, and *Diſrelliſh* Trades, and Sciences, which are converſant about them?

How eaſy is it to conceive (me-thinks) that he, whoſe Craſis favours *Judgment*, ſhould delight in the Rimation of Natures Secrets, and the Studies of *Phyſiologie*, wherein that Faculty is ſo uſefull? And that another, whoſe Conſtitution is advantageous unto *Phanſie*, ſhould take a ſpecial liking unto *Muſick*, *Limning*, *Poetry*, and *Romancing*, where Invention is ſo concerned? And that a Third, whoſe Temperament is perfective of *Memory*, ſhould fall in Love with *Arithmatique*, *Hiſtoriography*, and *Chronology*, which a tenacious Reminiſcency renders moſt facil and practicable? And that a Fourth, excelling in none of theſe Properties, ſhould be indifferently given to any of theſe Studies, and able by an Ingenuous ſedulity, to gain a competent Knowledge in them all? And from ſome influence of the *Body* it may very well be, (eſpecially if *Cuſtom*, or *Education* be found in conjunction with that Corporal prædominance) that

Æſculapius,

Æſculapius, *Mars*, *Vulcan*, &c. Should have their proper *Devoto's*, and Zealous *Sectators*.

Yea farther, it ſeems very probable to me, that the *Corporeal* part, ſhould ſway the *Mind* in reference to repudiating, or embracing the ſublimeſt, and moſt abſtracted Notions; whether of *Mathematicks*, *Metaphyſicks*, or *Theology*: Who knows not that the ſoundneſs of the *Intellect*, and the perfection of *Reaſon*, depend much upon the Fabrick, and modification of Mens Organs? That ſome are perfect *Innocents*, and *Ideots*, and others ſtupid *Dunces*, and invincible *Ignorants*, meerly from the imperfection of thoſe alone? And if the Frame of the *Body*, by its redundancy or defectiveneſs, can thus pervert the Underſtanding, and after the clearneſs and perſpicacity thereof; I think we may well pronounce it, the likely occaſion of thoſe free intellectual compliances, and thie averſations, which ſhew themſelves in different Perſons, to the ſame *Opinions*; for every one muſt conclude concerning them, according to their own *Idea's* and perceptions of them: And the apprehenſions of ſome, by reaſon of the rectitude of their *Bodies*, being more quick and penetrative; and thoſe of others, becauſe of the depravedneſs of the ſame, hebete and torpid; hence it happens, that ſome on their firſt hearing, are paſſionate *Amoriſts* of thoſe *Dogmata*, which before they were unacquainted with, they inſtantly comprehending their pulchritude and rationality; while others, are fain to ſuſpend their aſſent for a long time, and cannot become their hearty *Proſelytes*, till they have more throughly ſifted their warrantableneſs and ſolidity; and ſo by a ſlack and tardigradous progreſs, finally arrive at the approbation of them.

But

But when all perplexities are quite unfolded, and difficulties removed, and obſcurities baniſhed, and the preſented Theories are laid naked and bare to the underſtandings of Men, and reaſon pleads for their admiſſion into the affections; if then they cannot embrace and love them, but ſtill (when their truth and ſincerity, is as clear as the *Meridian* Sun) repulſe and ſhun them; yet neither does this at all evince, that their Souls ſunk down hither out of another life, prepoſſeſſed with any prejudicies, againſt the propoſed ſpeculations: For this there ſcrupuloſity and irreconcileableneſs to them, may ariſe purely from thoſe anticipations, and preconceptions, which *Cuſtome* and *Education* have inſtiled into them; whereby their affections are ſo inſnared, and captivated with extreme fondneſs to adverſe Principles, that they cannot for their lives, diſcard their old Favourites, to take in novel Sentiments in their room, though they have much greater reaſon to be kindly entertained, than thoſe glozing *Sycophants*, and leſs veracious Principles, which have ſo long been the welcome *Gueſts*. Cuſtome we know is a ſecond Nature; and if once abſurdities come to be naturalized, by uſe and education; it will be hard to eradicate them, and to diſabuſe the mind from thoſe prepoſſeſſions ſhe labours under, though never ſo nonſenſical and ridiculous: And if it be hard to emancipate the thoughts, when ſervilely inſlaved to falſe *Prolepſes*; it muſt upon the ſame ſcore be difficult alſo, to make them faſten upon genuine apprehenſions of thoſe things, whereof they have hitherto been miſperſwaded: For contrary opinions cannot dwell together in the ſame mind at once; we muſt therefore be divorced from the falſe,

falſe, before we can be eſpouſed to the true; and if a Cuſtomary dilection of ſpurious notions, makes the firſt work uneaſy, it muſt neceſſarily make the latter ſo too: Wherefore we need not aſcribe our perverſe reluctancies, to cloſe with palpable Truths, to any congenial diſlikes or incongruities to them, born into the World with us; but only to our non-intellections of them; or elſe to our familiarity, and long addictedneſs to oppoſite Doctrines, whereby we are obfirmed, and holden in an inexpugnable diſaffection of them: And for the farther confirmation of this, I challenge any Man to ſpeak, when ever he met with an Ingenious *Philoſopher*, and propounded a rational maxime to him, in prejudice of which he never read, nor heard, nor obſerved any thing; and he did not readily own it, and without the leaſt tergiverſation amicably fall in and comply with it, notwithſtanding his ſtiffeſt natural indiſpoſitions thereunto; provided that he had full, and right conceivings of it?

4. But when all is done, if this *Hypotheſis* proves too weak and narrow, to bottom theſe *Phænomena* upon; if the influence of the *Body*, *Cuſtome* and *Education*, will not ſatisfactorily explicate, the great diverſity of mens inſitous vergencies and propenſions; they may then be imputed to a *ſecret Cauſality*, and pronounced the effects of a *Latent* and *incognite Principle*: And though this may ſeem leſs *Philoſophical*, yet I am ſure it is a far ſafer Courſe, than to deduce them from *Præexiſtence*; for thus we do but modeſtly confeſs our own Blindneſs and Ignorance, which perhaps at laſt the Studies of the Ingenuous, may illighten and aboliſh; whereas they that *Right* or *Wrong*, will make *Præexiſtence* the ſource of theſe inclinations,

and

and think they have thereby compleatly ſolved them; run themſelves upon bigger Prejudicies, and become guilty of the *Tinkers* error, that in mending one hole, makes two; for while by this means, they (in their own apprehenſions) bolt one door againſt a Rout of *Abſurdities*, they fling open another to numerous inconveniences, and let in ſuch a train and rabble of *audacious* Errors, as do not only tumult and mutiny amongſt themſelves, to the great diſparagement of the *Hypotheſis*; but daringly confront the *Churches* Authority, and rudely inſolence *Religion* her ſelf, contemerating her hallowed *Inſtitutions*. This charge I might make good, by a large Enumeration of the *Antiſtæchal*, or inconſiſtent Notions coincident with *Præexiſtence*; and its huge diſconformities to the HOLY CHURCH, in her profeſſed Doctrines; but the digreſſion would be too tedious and unſeaſonable; I forbear it therefore, and go on where I left.

I ſay then, if our bodily Tempers, and the Uſages and Aſſuefactions of *Life*, in which we have been trained up and nurtured, ſeem not *adæquate* Cauſes, of our different Inclinations and *Geniuſſes*; we may ſecurely believe there is ſomething elſe, though we connot poſitively determine what, that is concurrent to the production of them: And for my own part, I am half perſwaded, that the ſame active Principle which Rules in the diverſimodous Nidulations of *Birds*; and elegant Glomerations of Induſtrious *Silk-Worms*, that directs Ingenious *Arachne*, in her pretty Weavings, and prompts laborious Inſects, in rearing their mellifluous Combs: That guides the *Brutes* to ſuch peculiar Games; and inſtructs them in the crafty inſidiations of their Preys: That ſows the Seeds of

Love and *Enmity*, between things void of Paſſion; in *Kind* and *Amorous* Sympathies, and *croſs*, *diſcordant*, fell Antypathies. Some ſuch thing I ſay (though I cannot think it that Prodigious *Hobgoblin*, the *Spirit of Nature*) which produceth theſe ſtrange effects; where the *Genius* is naturally bent to any ſpecial *Excerciſe*, may put a Bias in the Phanſie, and wind and draw it to the ſame.

CHAP. VI.

1. *A Fifth Argument, from the* Præexiſtence *of the* Meſſiah's *Soul*; 2. *Refuted.*

1. THE Next Argument to confirm the *Hypotheſis*, is the *Præexiſtence of our Saviours Humanity*: His Soul (ſay our *Antagoniſts*) was in Being long before he aſſumed Fleſh, and actuated a *Terreſtrial* Body: He appeared to the *Patriarchs* of Old, and tranſacted with *Moſes*, about freeing *Iſrael* from the *Ægyptian* Bondage; and when he had broken the Yoke of their intollerable Thraldom, and led them into liberty; he gave them a Law from Heaven, and became their Mighty Patron and Protector, all along governing and conducting them, in their tedious Marches to the Land of *Promiſe*. And leaſt this Argumentation ſhould fail of ſucceſs, and be rejected as an empty Fiction, and vain Conjecture, of the Phanſiful and Opinionative; it is backt with a number of Holy Scriptures, and there is ſcarce a Text in the ſacred Book, which ſpeaks of his Deſerting his Glory, his

his Descent from above, his Profection from the Father, and his Return to him again; but is deemed an authentick evidence of this Suppositition, that the Soul of JESUS existed before his Incarnation.

2. Now not to squabble about the truth of this (which is very doubtfull) I shall quickly yield, that the Soul of CHRIST was long extent, before it was Incarnate. But then certainly this is a very rotten and lubricous Foundation, for a *General Præexistence*; and to conclude that from hence, would be an Inference guilty of shamefull presumption and inconsequence: For there are divers ponderous Reasons for our LORD'S προύπαρξις, which cannot be alledged for ours. *Confu*

As First; He was the incomparable and peerless Favourite of the GOD-HEAD, and immeasurably indeared to the HOLY TRIAD: He was ὁ υἱὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς, the BELOVED *Son*, and was affected by the DIVINITY, with an infinite tenderness, such as no φιλὸς ἄνθρωπος meer *Man*, no nor the loftiest *Angel* must expect; and being thus highly advanced in the Divine Love, no marvell if he were dignified with extraordinary Kindnesses, and raised to a participation of such matchless *Prerogatives* (of which *Præexistence* might be one) as were never to be indulged to the common sort of Mortals. *Mat. 3. ult.*

Again, one prime End of his Mission hither, was to suffer bitter and terrible things, for the Sons of Men; he was to be despised and mocked, persecuted and betrayed, slandered and reviled, spit upon and buffeted; he was to be falsly accused, unjustly condemned, and ignominiously Crucified: And on his Cross he was to bear the Sins of all the World; and

to grapple with the wrath of an incenſed Deity; and to ſuſtain the heavy malediction of the Law; and to be made a *Victim* to his Fathers JUSTICE, and a perfect *Holocauſt* to expiate our high offences, and attone the Majeſty of Heaven to us; it was but juſt therefore that he ſhould *Præexiſt*, that ſo theſe his Paſſions might be uſhered in with a *prævious* Happineſs; and that he might poſſeſs the Beatitude of the *Cœleſtial* Life, as an *Ante-præmium*, to ſweeten and alleviate his enſuing Miſeries.

But then beſides (for I Study brevity) it was requiſite he ſhould *Præexiſt* upon another accompt; namely, that he might be the *Head* and *Husband* of the CHURCH, to inſtruct and guide it, ſuperintend and moderate the affairs of it; that ſo thoſe Souls, which were in the End, to be bought with the effuſion of his Blood, might from the beginning, be ruled by his *Power* and *Goodneſs*, and live under his Tutelary Care and Providence.

So that grant our *Redeemer*'s Soul to have *Præexiſted*; yet there being not the ſame Reaſons for us to do as he did; his *Præexiſtence* cannot be Concluſive of ours.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

1. *Another Argument for Præexiſtence, from the great* Right *it does the* ALMIGHTY, *conſiſting of two Branches.* 2. *The firſt Branch urged,* 3. *And anſwered.* 4. *The ſecond Branch urged,* 5. *And anſwered.*

1. A Sixth Argument which ſtands up for Præexiſtence, and offers to maintain its Intereſt, delivers it ſelf to this effect; That *it ſpeaks more true and honourable things of GOD, than the Hypotheſis of immediate Creation*; and does not beſpatter him with ſuch foul indignities, as that prophanely throws upon him; but clearly wipes off all ill-favour'd Dotches, and uncomely Macula's, wherewith it ſlurs his brighteſt purity, and denigrates the whiteneſs, and ſullies the ſplendor of his Glory; ſo that the Plea divides it ſelf into two Branches: Let us ſee how each is vibrated againſt the commune Hypotheſis, and how that behaves it ſelf in the rencounter, ſo as to come off invulnerate: for the grand deſign of this Argument, is to ſubvert the opinion of *Immediate Creation*, and then to triumph in its overthrow, erecting Præexiſtence on the ruines of it. Which Arg

2. In the Firſt place, is conceived (by ſuch as would have it do ſo) to utter moſt *Truth* of GOD; for it accurately coheres with his own Declaration, of reſting 1. Br urg.

from

from his Work on the Seventh Day, and according to the Tenor of inſpired Teſtimony, conſigns his Creative operations, within the ſpace of the firſt Hebdomade: after which, his Power of making Creatures ceaſed to act, and retired into himſelf for ever, celebrating an *Holy Sabbath*, never to terminate or expire; and though it hath been ever ſince imployed in ſuſteining the Univerſe, and the various eſſences therein contained, and in managing the ſame, in conformity to the Rules of exacteſt Prudence; yet it hath alwayes deſiſted from new productions, and hath hitherto ſuperadded nothing, to thoſe primitive Subſtances, to which the firſt Senarie, or ſix dayes ſpace, allotted being. This, as the HOLY GHOST by the infallible Pen, of his firſt and great Amanuenſis teacheth, was GOD'S method in fabricating the World, he made all things together in the Beginning, and never augmented them by an after Creation: and this plauſibly argues the truth of Præexiſtence, that it is ſo concinnous, and very accommodate to the ſacred Story of the Creation, allowing GOD to have compleated the ſame in his ſix dayes Work, and then to change his Labour into eternal Reſt. Whereas if we take up the General Faith, we muſt believe quite another thing; that GOD did not put a period to his Works, and inchoate his Reſt at ſix dayes end, according to Scripture evidence, and the expreſs declaration of the Spirit in that behalf; but is daily buſied in Creating Souls, which imployment he ſeems to have reſigned thouſands of years ago.

3. To this I briefly rejoyn, that the Opinion of Souls immediate creation, as to the Inſtance given, complies as fairly with the mind of the Bible, as Præexiſtence does:

does: And as that releaſeth GOD from his Works, at the end of ſix dayes, ſo does this, though with a lawful Difference; for whereas that binds him to ceaſe from Creating at all, after the term of ſix Dayes; this ſuppoſeth that after that time he acquieſced from creating *new Species* only, but alloweth him ſtill to multiply ſome of their *Individuals*, according to his own Beneplaciture; nor needs this hinder him from ſanctifying a perpetual *Sabbath* in himſelf; for if as great a work as this be competible to his declared Reſt, this may be conſiſtent with it; and we all know, that though he Reſts for ever, yet he is daily active in regenerating ſouls, which is as great a Work as daily to create them, and therefore it is ſtiled παλιγγενεσία, and the ſubject of it καινότητος; ſo that for ought appears, the Hypotheſis of Daily Creation belies the Deity as little as Præexiſtence. But they complain it *diſhonours* him more; how juſtly will be ſeen, when we have heard the Charge drawn up againſt it, and its own Apologie.

4. The Accuſation is framed after this ſort; that it puts the Majeſty on high to *very ſervile and unworthy Offices*, and tasks him to ſuch homely and invenuſt imployments, as are ſcarce conſiſtent with his verecundous Holineſs: for if that be true, when ever the laſcivious conſent to uncleanneſs, and are pleaſed to joyn in unlawful mixtures and embraces, GOD is forced to ſtand a Spectator of their vile impurities, and to aſſiſt their beſtial pleaſures, with no leſs than a ſpecial act of Creation; then when ever any luſtful Mates combine to gratifie their vitious Paſſions, and unite in ſhameful and forbidden Copulations, Omnipotence it ſelf muſt ſtoop from its Throne, to attend their unholy practices, and rain down ſhowers of Souls from above,

2. B
urg.

to

to actuate the Emanations of their baſe Concupiſcence, and all this to a goodly purpoſe: leſt Natures Excrements ſhould miſcarry, and the Rudiments and Inchoations of life, laid by venereous Wantons, ſhould prove effœte and periſh. And is not this a fine ſeemly undertaking for the Great JEHOVAH? to wait upon the Libidinous in their Fornications, Adulteries, Inceſts, and Buggeries; and to ingage his Power in Creating Souls, to animate thoſe vital preparations, which their deteſtable filthineſs miniſters? Should we ſtudy for ever to diſgrace him, and to confront his loftineſs and purity, by an indigne exerciſe, what could we task him to, more ſordid and inglorious?

And moreover it condemns him of *ſtrange overſight and inſipience*, and ſuppoſeth him to act very ineptly in many Caſes; in that he often includes the Souls of men in inconvenient Habitations, and ſentenceth them to monſtrous and miſhapen Bodies, notwithſtanding he was well aware of the ſupervening obliquities, and deformities; this, were it true, would be no ſmall ſcandal to his unbounded Sapience. But here again Præexiſtence vindicates him to the full; for that transfers the fate of the afflicted Spirits, upon *Secondary Cauſes*, and blames their Exorbitancies and miſcarriages, for framing their Bodies ſo imperfect and anomalous, and then for drawing them down into them.

nfut. 5. Theſe are the black and opprobrious Calumnies, which onerate the Hypotheſis of Souls *immediate Creation*, in the ſecond place: It ſacrilegiouſly detracts from GODS infinite Holineſs, and foully blemiſheth his perfect Wiſdom; but it is chargeable with nothing leſs than theſe reproachful Characters; and deſerves them no more, than that other Opinion, for the juſtification

cation and eſtabliſhment of which, it is thus aſperſed. What dehoneſtation of GOD'S Integrity, can poſſibly reſult from his providing Souls for ſpurious Iſſues, more than for thoſe of a legall Generation? He gave Mankind a Power of begetting their like, after ſuch a manner; and when by virtue of this Power, their ſpermatick Principles are fitted for animation, he is determined by his own Goodneſs (which from the beginning preſcribed him ſuch an œconomy, or method of acting) to infuſe Souls into them: And when he comes to ſupply their prolifique ſubſtances, with Souls from himſelf, he regards not their procreative Applications, whether they were lawfull or not; but conſiders them barely in their *Natural* reſpects, and ſo can with as much Honour, and as little infamy to his own Sacredneſs, prepare Souls for illegitimate *Fœtuſſes*, as for thoſe of an honeſter propogation: For he looks upon them as deveſted of all *Moral* Circumſtances, and as the pure *Natural* Fruits, of that harmleſs Faculty, which He at firſt implanted in his Creatures. 'Tis true, if People abuſe this Faculty, and make it inſervient to diſhoneſt Procreations; in this there is filthineſs and ſhame enough (becauſe the thing is diametrically oppoſite to the Laws of *Chaſtity*, which ſhould be kept inviolate) but then the ignominy and pollution lights upon the Criminals only, and though GOD furniſheth the illicit Conceptions, with Souls inſpired from above; yet in thus doing, he is as clean from all dedecorous conſpurcations and defilements, as if they were legitimate off-ſprings of the Conjugal Bed: For he eyes them only in their *Phyſical* habitudes, and capacities; in reference to which they are no way ſinful, nor can GOD'S attendance on them be diſhonourable;

ſo that this Argument againſt immediate Creation, might as well have been urged from his vigilance over *Innocent*, as *Unlawful* Coitions; they being both alike, ſo far as they are *Natural*, and ſo far as he intermeddles with them, when he formeth Souls to vivifie the productions of them: But as our Adverſaries deemed not the *Firſt*, a convenient Topick, ſo neither do I the *Latter*; for if it be duely ſearched, it will be found, to caſt as little indignity, and prophanation upon GOD, as *Præexiſtence* it ſelf. To illuſtrate this, imagine GOD ſhould Create one Soul, and as ſoon as He had done, inſtantly pop it into a baſe-begotten Body: And then Create another, the matter of an hours ſpace before its præcipitation into ſuch a Receptacle: Which of theſe actions, would be moſt diminutive of the Creators Honour? Would not the difference be inſenſible, and the ſcandal, if any, the ſame in both? Yet thus lies the caſe juſt, betwixt *Præexiſtentiaries* and *Us*: We ſay GOD inliveneth the genital Seed of voluptuous *Carnaliſts*, with new Created Souls: They hold, they were made ſome thouſands of Ages agoe; which in reſpect of GOD, and the *Eternity* he injoyes, was not an hour before: Which of theſe *Tenets* now, conciliates moſt veneration to our Maker? Do they not both ſpeak things equally *worthy*, or *unworthy* of Him? And if both favour him alike, what a doughty Argument is this, to vouch the Intereſt of *Præexiſtence*, above the other *Hypotheſis*; by telling us it allows more honourable apprehenſions of GOD, than *That?* What does it ſpeak of him, but what it well beſeems himſelf to own, and every Good Man to beleive concerning Him? Admit that his watchfull Providence, waits upon diſſolute voluptuaries,

tuaries, in their unmeet conjunctions, and ſends down freſh Created Spirits, to actuate their obſcæne Emiſſions; what is here done, which is not very high and becoming GOD, and moſt congruous and proportionate, to his immenſe Grandeur and Majeſty? For in the Firſt place, his Condeſcention is hereby made ſignal and eximious: He is Glorioufly humble beyond a Parallel; and by his own example, Leſſons us to perform the meaneſt Works, if fit and profitable; and to be content even to drudge for the common Benefit of the World. And Secondly, hereby he elicits *Good* out of *Evill*, cauſing famous and Heroick Perſons, to take their Origin from baſe occaſions; and ſo converts the Luſts of ſenſual *Varlets*, to nobler Ends than they deſigned them. And then Thirdly, hereby he often detects the lewdneſs of Sinners, which otherwiſe would be ſmothered; and brings them to condigne puniſhment, which otherwiſe would be evaded; and makes their exemplary penance and infamy, a notable Corrective to the like vices in them, that otherwiſe would commit them. Now are not all theſe actions and concerns (to be illuſtrioufly condeſcenſive; to bring Good out of Evill; to diſcover, puniſh, and prevent Sin) very graceful and agreeable unto GOD? Yet to intitle him to theſe offices, is all the diſhonour our *Hypotheſis* does him; and therefore I hope, it credits him as much as its invidious Rival, *Præexiſtence*.

But I had almoſt forgotten the other noted blemiſh, wherewith it is ſaid to avile and criminate him: namely, *imprudence* and *ſtolidity*; for if GOD creates all Souls, juſt before they are united unto Bodies, he muſt incorporate ſome in very incommodious Dwel-

lings: That is, where there Bodies are disfigured with greivous distortions, or cumbered with sad monstrosities, or mutilated with unnatural deficiencies, or loden with superfluous protuberancies and excrescencies; to think GOD should immure new Created Spirits, in such deformed and incongruent Bodies, would pend hard upon the Attribute of his Wisdom, and be very exitious to the Repute thereof.

But I Answer in a word; He that can rescue himself from dormitation and prejudice, and with an advertent and unbiass'd mind, rightly perpend this gloomy passage of the Divine Providence; will easily construe it to a better sense. Many of GOD'S *Judgments* are Rom. 11. 33. Ἀνεξερεύνητα, deep and inscrutable; and *his Wayes* Ἀνεξιχνίαστοι, invious and investigable; and so may this be we are now discoursing: When he Creates the Souls of men, and immediately consigns to them ill-featur'd Mansions, there may be vast profundities of *Wisdom* in the Affair, which our shallow Natures cannot fathom: GOD may send these Judgments on some secret Errands, and important messages, to the afflicted parties, or their nearest Relatives; and convince their Consciences why they came, though the World be unacquainted, with the purposes of their mission: Perhaps he may make them *Heralds* of his Anger, or *Monitors* of their sins, or *Censors* of their manners, to reprove and castigate those close *Enormities*, which never fell under publique Cognoscence; or to redress those apert Extravagancies, which are offensive unto every Eye: It may be he intends them for Ministers of Good, and Instruments of Mercy to them; for excitements to Virtue, and refrænations of Wantonness; for wholsome *Alexicaca*, and commodous absolutories from

from ſinful pravities, which otherwiſe might be more apt to incroach upon them; at leaſt this good effect, they may accompliſh upon all ſuch as are ſpectators of them, and have their hearts touched with any ſenſe of Piety and Religion: They cannot chuſe but ſet them a glorifying GOD, and fill their mouths with the lowdeſt *Hymns* of Praiſe, and tune their hearts to the higheſt *Key* of gratitude, in conſideration of their own bodily rectitude and indolence, and that natural ſymetrie and perfection, which adorns themſelves. And ſince the incluſion of *new* Created Souls, in ſuch ill contrived and diſadvantageous Bodies, may proceed upon ſuch excellent deſigns of Wiſdom as theſe, and others alſo to us indiſcernable; there is no reaſon, why GOD ſhould be blaſphemed with *Ineptneſs* in the Diſpenſation; or have his παρρησία, in reference to it, called in queſtion by inſulſe and maledicous blaterations.

In *fine* therefore, this Argument Concludes nothing for *Præexiſtence*, in as much as it does not diſcourſe moſt plauſibly of GOD: For the *Hypotheſis* of immediate Creation, is every whit as veriloquous, and ſpeaks as *decorous* things of Providence, as that, for all its bigg pretenſions.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *Another Argument from the* joynt ſuffrage of the Learned; 2. *Anſwered.* 3. *Why* Scripture Proofs *are ſilently* prætermitted.

rg. 1. THE Laſt Argument for *Præexiſtence*, which I ſhall take notice of, is founded upon the *general conſent of the Ancient Sophy*; all which agree in the approbation of it, unanimouſly voting, and agnizing it to be true. It was the Opinion of the *Ægyptian Gymnoſophiſts*, the *Perſian Magi*, the *Indian Brachmans*, the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, the *Græcian Philoſophers*, the *Britiſh Druides*, and ſome of the *Chriſtian Fathers*: The *Hebrew Sages* made it a part of their *Cabbala*, and pretend it a Doctrine primarily delivered from their Great Legiſlator *Moſes*; and being Stamped with ſuch great and venerable Authorities, it muſt needs paſs for a currant Truth.

nſwt. 2. But to ſtop the mouth of this *Sonorous* Allegation, I Anſwer; that it makes an huge noiſe to little purpoſe: Like a Cannon charg'd with Powder, it goes off with a loud report, but does no execution, becauſe void of its murderous load.

For Firſt, I conceive that ſome of the fore-cited Sects, were Perſons but *indifferently Learned*; their Renown did much exceed their Knowledge, and their Fame by far out-went their Wiſdom: They were ſome of them perhaps, no better than flat *Dæmonolaters*, in ſtrict League with *Diabolical* Spirits, and maintained too

too cloſe an amity and familiar intercourſe, with the *Æreal* Principality; and being favoured and abetted by them, they could by *Theurgical* Rites, and Inchantations, do ſtrange feats, and amuſe and awe the People, by their Sorceries and Necromancies, Magical tricks and Præſtigious colluſions; but as for their acquaintance with ſober Philoſophy, 'tis like it was not over deep nor intimate; ſo that their Authority, is but a ſlender prop to underſet *Præexiſtence* withal.

And in the Second place, that of the *Circumciſed Doctors*, is not ſo ſtrong as to bear it up by main force: For though they had the Law of GOD amongſt them, and ſo had their Minds illightened with a purer ſcience, than the Gentile *Sophiſts*; yet they were friends to many groſs and monſtrous Errors, of which in all likelihood this was one. The Sacred Volume informs us, that ſome of them peremptorily aſſerted, Μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν, μηδ' ἄγγελον, μήτε πνεῦμα. *That there was neither Reſurrection, nor Angel, nor Spirit.* And *Maimonides* one of the principal Maſters, beleived that Immortality, was the Prerogative of *Juſt* and *Righteous* Souls only; and as for the Impious, they periſhed together with their Bodies. And this *R. Kimchi* ſtoutly argues from thoſe words in the firſt *Pſalm.* לא־יקמו רשעים במשפט *The Ungodly ſhall not riſe, or ſtand in the Judgment:* And becauſe it is ſaid in the 17. *v.* of 115. *Pſal.* לא המתים יהללו־יה ולא כל ירדי דומה *The Dead praiſe not the* LORD, *nor any that deſcend into ſilence, or the Grave:* This forſooth he makes another Proof of it; and from the ſame Text he might as wiſely have concluded, that every ones Soul is Mortal, and extinct at Death, it being ſpoken of the המתים or *Dead* in General, and not of the Improbous alone. And Couſin-German

German to this was that notorious Miſtake, which *Elias Levita* ſets down, for the common Opinion of the *Cabbaliſts*, touching the Μετεμψύχωσις, or *Tranſanimation*, called by them גלגול הנשמות or the *Revolution of Souls*: For they Childiſhly conceited, that every Soul muſt be incorporated in three ſeveral Bodies; and the Phanſie they confirm with a proper teſtimony *Job.*33. 29. הן כל־ אלה יפעל־ אל פעמים שלש עם גבר *See how God Worketh all theſe things thrice with Man:* And becauſe the word אדם contains the three Initial letters, of *Adam*, *David*, *Meſſiah*; from thence they vainly inferr, that theſe three, had but *one* Soul commune to them all, which firſt dwelt in *Adam's* Body, then in *Davids*, and laſtly in the *Meſſiahs*. A goodly conjecture, and as likely as that which would fetch an Indication of a *Trinity*, from the *ſecond* word of *Geneſis* ברא becauſe it is compounded of the Inchoative letters of אב בן רוח nor did they only hold the tranſmigration of Souls, from one humane Body to another; but fondly imagined that they paſſed out of the Bodies of Men, into thoſe of Birds and Brutes, as *R. Bechai* declares: To which add and ridiculous Phanſies, I ſhall adjoyn but one more as fond, and extravagant as the reſt; I mean their גלגול המתים or *Revolution of the Dead*; wherewith they were generally poſſeſt, firmly beleiving that all the Carcaſſes of the *Jews*, interred out of *Paleſtine*, ſhould roll under ground into the *Holy Land*, that ſo they might riſe in their own Country, at the day of Judgment, together with the reſt of their Compatriots. Now they that could ſwallow all theſe abſurdities, and hundreds beſides, without chewing: Why ſhould *Præexiſtence* go againſt their Stomachs? Or what reaſon

ſon have we to take it up upon their credit, and to beleive it for a truth, becauſe they taught it?

Nor will its being a Branch of the *Cabbala*, free it from the ſuſpicion of falſhood, but rather make it more obnoxious to it: For that being delivered down by *Oral* tradition, from one to another, till the days of R. *Jehuda*; who is thought to have firſt collected it into Writing; no wonder if in ſo long a decurſe of time, many counterfeit and ſubditicious things were foiſted into it, and *Præexiſtence* for one; all which he might publiſh for weighty truths, as thinking them primarily imparted from the mouth of *Moſes*, though he never ſpent his breath, in recommending ſuch nugacities to Poſterity

As for the *Græcian Philoſophers*, and *Chriſtian Fathers* that aſſerted *Præexiſtence*; though they were worthy and famous Perſons, yet their owning of the *Tenet*, is not enough to authorize and eſtabliſh it: For they could ſpeculate falſly as well as others, and patronize notorious Errors. Let any ſober and judicious Man, but ſeriouſly reflect upon the ſtrange and gariſh whimſies, the toyiſh and abſurd futilities, the ſilly and delirous ſopperies of admirable *Plato*; who for his ſtupendious Learning and variety of Knowledge, is all along of his *Biographers*, ſtiled Θεῖος, and Θεολόγος: And now adored as a petty *Numen*, by many *Philoſophick* Zealots of the preſent Age. And let him conſider the enormous *Dogmata* of inclytous *Origen*, who Wrote above Nine thouſand Volumes, and before whom *Plotinus* himſelf, revering his prudence and ſagacitie, durſt not continue his Lecture. And then let him ſpeak, whether the beſt of *Græcian Philoſophers*, and the choiceſt of *Chriſtian Fathers*, were

Vid. Porphyx. in vit. Plotin.

not very deceivable; and might not easily be mislead in this, as well as in other instances.

Briefly therefore to apply a general Answer to the Argument: Admit it be an ancient Doctrine, and countenanced and maintained by renowned Schollars; yet this will hardly prove it true. For the greatest Clerks have faulty Pens, and Write not without their blots. The wisest Authors are but Men, and we know *humanum est errare*, by their Nature they are fallible, and made obnoxious to *Hallucinations*: So that for all their consenting to, and approving of, any such particular Notion or Opinion, it may still be false and erroneous. And that the most incomparable *Virtuosoes*, have had their slips and Errors, I might demonstrate by a large induction of Examples, and weary both my self and Reader with their numerositie; but let us take one for all, I mean *Des-Cartes*: And when I recollect his unlucky oversights, how he makes *all Motion to be Reciprocal*; and holds the *same Degree of it to be alwayes in the Universe*; and confidently affirms that *Omnipotence it self can never effect a Vacuum*; but above all, when I call to mind his internecine *Hylolatry*, and bloody dotage upon *Matter*, whereby he makes it to be ἀυτοκίνητον, and so opens a wide gap to *Atheism*; and at one blow massacres all the Brute-Animals in the World; supposing them to be meer ἀυτόματα, or *Mechanical* Engines, indued with no immaterial Principle, but absolving all their Actions by virtue of the scite of their Organs, and confirmation of their members; without the assistance of any Soul at all: And so treads counter to the mind of *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Empedocles*, *Democritus*, *Porphyrie*, and other noted Antiquities, who rightly contended that they had

had not only Souls, but Souls exalted to ſome degree of *Rationality.* When I ſay, I revolve in my thoughts the egregious failures of this Excellent *Philoſopher*; and perceive his *Placita* to be ſo faulty and exorbitant: I cannot but conclude it hugely unſafe, to pin our Faith upon any mans ſleeve; and that we have but little cauſe to acknowledge this *Dogma* for a Truth, becauſe the *Great ones* ſo pronounce it.

And now to draw towards a Concluſion. If there have been many of the Learned for *Præexiſtence*; yet I am ſure there have been as many of them, that never ſubſcribed to it: So that putting in one againſt the other, we ſhall bring the Ballance to an even poize; and the Argument that ſeemed ſo very ponderous, will weigh juſt nothing at all.

3. I ſhould here take in hand the *Scripture Arguments*, which are made to favour the Opinion: But I find the principal of them, dexterouſly Anſwered already by an Ingenious Pen; and therefore I ſhall ſpare my ſelf that Labour.

CHAP. IX.

1. *The First* Objection *against* Præexistence, *that it is Grounded upon odd presumption, of* Heterogeneity *in the Souls of Men*; 2. *Which is very* incertain, 3. *And also* Improbable, *because attended with gross* Absurdities. 4. *The First* Absurdity. 5. *The Second.* 6. *The Third.* 7. *The Fourth.* 8. *The Fifth.* 9. *The Sixth.*

1. I Pass now to the Third and Last thing proposed; namely to give in such *Objections* against the *Hypothesis*, as my hasty thoughts shall suggest: And without the Cunctation of any præliminary Ambages, the First shall be this: That it is built upon an incertain and unlikely *Conjecture*: It supposeth an *Heterogeneity* in the Soul of Man; that it consists of a primary substance, and a Secondary emanative from that: Of a perceptive, and plastick part; in which latter resides a triple vital Congruity, to a three-fold Vehicle, *viz. Æthereal, Aereal,* and *Terrestrial.*

2. Now that this is a thing extreamly *dubious*, is manifest: For our acquaintance with Spirits is so little, and our ignorance of their Nature so great, that we can positively and certainly conclude no such matter concerning them. He that pretends to a graphical description, a punctual and explicit account, of their Beings

Beings and Properties, does but fondly *Platonize*, in offering at that which is above his reach, and falls not within the compaſs of his abilities to perform: And when he hath beat his Brains, and wearied his Phanſie, and tired himſelf in muſing on the imaginary *Phænomena* of their Eſſence; and hath made a ſhift to coin ſome pretty Phantaſtick notions of it, and to connect them together in an handſom Method, and elegant contexture: Yet in the concluſion, all will amount but to a Philoſophick *Legend* or *Romance*; which the Wiſe and Learned will as ſoon believe, as they will the famed Exploits of *Don Quixot*; or the pranks of noted *Hudibras*. The Man that attempts a diſtinct explication, of the Nature of the Soul in this life, does but tread a confounding Maze, and loſe himſelf in a Labyrinth of difficulties; out of which there is no extrication: It is enough if in the next World, we have ſuch a Clue of Knowledge put into our hands, as will guide us ſafely through the *Mæandrian* flexures, *Anfractuous* Circles, and *Sinuous* Nooks and *Anguloſities* thereof.

3. And that there ſhould be ſuch an *Heterogeneity* in Humane Souls, as is confidently aſſerted; is moreover a thing very improbable; for it implies many prodigious *Abſurdities*, a *Specimen* of which I ſhall next relate.

4. Firſt, if the Souls of Men be made *Heterogeneous*, and their Plaſtick part, be the Seat of a three-fold vital aptitude; this will charge GOD with great *unkindneſs* to them, or unſeemly *overſight*, in Creating them: Not becauſe by this frame of their Nature, they were made peccable (for a meer peccability, if withall they had been inveſted with a power of retaining their

their Innocence, would have been no injury to them) but becauſe they were hereby obliged, and neceſſitated to tranſgreſs: Their Will was not ſo much in fault, that they revolted from GOD, as the ſtructure and conſtitution of their Eſſence. Hear the Reviver of *Origens* Opinions, who ſpeaks truth in the Caſe: *count. Origen, . pag. 49.* *They being originally made with a capacity, to join with this Terreſtrial matter, it ſeems neceſſary according to the Courſe of Nature, that they ſhould ſink into it, and ſo appear Terreſtrial Men.* So that Men by the very mode and faſhion of their Nature (ſuppoſing it indued with a triple Congruity of life) were conſtrained to unite with Earthly Bodies; and conſequently to violate the Laws of Innocence, that ſo their capacity of living in conjunction, with Terreſtrial ſubſtance, might be awakened and excited. For without antecedent obliquities, and the practice of illicit things, no Soul according to the Hypotheſis of *Præexiſtence*, can become fit to actuate a fleſhly Vehicle: For ſo long as the mind is unpolluted, and free from the contagion of Vice and Sin, the *Æthereal* Congruity maintains its Empire, binding up the Terreſtrial one in a dormant condition, which nothing can let looſe to domineer in the Soul, but vitiouſneſs and immorality: So that if the *Nature* of Mankind, neceſſitated their union with *Terreſtrial* matter, it did alſo as an indiſpenſable Præparative thereunto, neceſſitate their *Lapſe* into Impiety. And if the GOD of Heaven Tranſacts at this rate with his Creatures; if he ſo contrives their Beings, as that the very *Fabrick* and *Compoſure* of them, irreſiſtibly hales them into unrighteouſneſs, and ſubjects them to ſin and miſery, I think for giving them ſuch a Nature, He may well be ſaid to act unkindly towards them, which he cannot do.

Nor

Not will it mend the matter to ſay, he intended not that their Plaſtick powers, ſhould *involve* them in ſo great misfortunes: For this were to accuſe him of ſtrange *Folly* and *inadvertency*; as if when he formed Man, he did not mind or underſtand his Frame, but fixed a Principle in his Nature *unawares*, that he never meant ſhould be exerciſed and made uſe of: Which yet at length exalting it ſelf, againſt the Superior faculties of his Soul, Naturally and Fatally plunged him into Sin, and an Union with the droſſieſt Corporeity.

5. Secondly, it makes one Created ſubſtance, *generative* and *productive* of the *Eſſence* of another; which in my apprehenſion is a thing impoſſible, it perfectly exceeding the Nature and Capacity of it, ſo to do. There is nothing that I can think on in the World, Omnipotence excepted; that can be the Efficient Cauſe of the Eſſence, of any ſubſtantial Being. 'Tis true the Sun is emiſſive of light, and the Fire of heat; but I hope none are ſo inconſiderate, as to take Light and Heat for ſubſtances: Yet this vaſt and admirable power of producing ſubſtantial Eſſence in it ſelf, is aſcribed to the Soul of Man, by the Hypotheſis of its *Heterogeneity*. For if I rightly underſtand the Learned *Author of the Notion, the *Radical*, *Central*, *Primary*, and *Perceptive* part of the Soul, is the object of Creation: But the ſecondary, and Plaſtick *flows entirely* from that, as an Emanative effect; and yet is held for a true and proper ſubſtance nevertheleſs. This to me is a thing very abſurd and inconceivable, that one finite Subſtance ſhould beget the Eſſence of another. But that which farther perplexeth the Myſtery, and renders it more obſcure and unintelligible is, that the Secondary ſubſtance of the Soul, *differs widely* from the Primary, though

*See *More's Immortality. Book. Chap. Sect.*

e the
e Im-
tali-
Book.
C. 11.
§. 10.

though it be an immediate Emanation of it: For whereas the Primary part is *Intelligent*, and *perceptive*; the Secondary or Plaſtick, is * deſtitute both of *Reaſon* and *Senſation*. And how this ſhould come to paſs, is another great Riddle: For if one Subſtance produceth another by emanative Cauſality, the Subſtance ſo produced, muſt neceſſarily be an Emanation of the very Eſſence of the Efficient: And if it be an Eſſenſial Emanation of it, it muſt be the very ſame with it (for the Eſſence of a thing cannot vary from it ſelf) and conſequently muſt have all thoſe endowments, faculties, and perfections in it, which are exiſtent in that. To affirm, the percipient part of the Soul can diſplay it ſelf in a *ſubſtantial* efflux, void of Senſe; is methinks, juſt as if one ſhould ſay, the *Solar* Orb can ſhine forth beams of Darkneſs, and hath a power of darting mid-night through the *Hemiſphere* it reſides in: For Darkneſs is not a more abſolute privation of the Suns Excellence, which is Light, than ſenſeleſſneſs is of the perfection of the Souls *Central* part, which is Rationality and Perception.

And amongſt other reaſons, this is one, that perſwades me the Material World is not an *Emanative Effect* of the Deity; becauſe then it muſt have been Homogeneal with the Divine Eſſence; and ſo not matter, but a Spiritual Subſtance. For that ſuch a *moles* of Corporeity, ſhould proceed from GOD, without any intermediate act of his, or any other Cauſality, but his bare Exiſtence, conſidering he is a Spirit; and ſo in a principal Attribute of his Nature, *viz.* Immateriality, oppoſed unto Body, looks like a flat impoſſibility.

6. Thirdly, it overthrows the Article of the Bodies

dies *Reſurrection*: For no ſooner does the Soul by death quit her Terreſtrial habitation, but according to the tenour of this Hypotheſis, ſhe is incorporated in an *Aerial Vehicle*; and when her vital congruity to that expires, ſhe is united to one of *Æther*. So that having once put off her carnal Body, ſhe ſhall never be reinveſted with it more: And though we are aſſured by an infallible Word, that Τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο, *This very Corruptible, ſhall put on incorruption*; and Τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο, *This very Mortal, ſhall put on immortality*. Yet the vouchers of *Præexiſtence*, as if they felt a degree of Inſpiration, above the great *Apoſtle*, tell us bluntly there is no ſuch matter. But though virtuous Spirits, ſhall at length obtain incorruptible, immortal, and Cœleſtial Bodies; yet thoſe which they now wear, are not like to be made ſuch: For it ſhall not be incorruptible, immortal, and Cœleſtial fleſh, wherewith they ſhall be Cloathed in the Manſions of Eternity, but ſomething elſe. Thus the Author of that anonymous Piece, the Account of *Origen*, &c. delivers himſelf: *That the Body we now have, is therefore Corruptible, becauſe it is Fleſh; and therefore if it put on incorruption and immortality, it muſt put off it ſelf firſt, and ceaſe to be Fleſh*, Page, 120. And again Pag. 125. *If the Body of Fleſh be a Mortal Body; if it be quickened, and made a living and immortal one, it muſt be made ſomething elſe intrinſecally than what it was: But it being Fleſh before, it muſt not be Fleſh when it is inlivened too.* So that by this device of a triple *Congruity* of Life, ingrafted in the *Plaſtick* of the Soul; the Reſurrection of theſe *identical* Bodies, which we *depoſite* at Death, is very fairly exploded. For if the Soul hath three ſuch vital aptitudes, as before were named, and the *Æthereal*

be the laſt that is invigorated; while it is ſo, it is impoſſible that ſhe ſhould actuate any other Vehicle, than what is of an *Æthereal* Conſiſtency. In Heaven therefore there is no ſuch thing as *Glorified Fleſh*, nor conſequently ſhould our fleſhly Bodies, ever be reſuſcitated in order to Glorification: Yet the word RESURRECTION plainly implies thus much; that the ſame Bodies, which we leave behind us at our departure hence, ſhall riſe again in their numerical Identity: But then to illude this, we are told a fine Story; that Ἀνάστασις, is a word of a *lax and ambiguous ſignification*; that it denotes *Eternal Life*, or a *bleſſed Immortality*; and according to this ſenſe and reddition of it, we may have a true *Reſurrection*, though our Bodies after our *Analyſis*, ſleep for ever in the Duſt. But what a pitifull ſubterfuge, and helpleſs evaſion is this? For if Ἀνάστασις, be properly *Eternal Life*, then whoever partake of the Reſurrection (which all the Dead ſhall do) ſhould participate of *Immortality* and *Bleſſedneſs*: And then what ſhall we make of the *Evangeliſts* Ἀνάστασις κρίσεως, *Reſurrection of Condemnation* ſpoken of St. *John* 5. 29? And that which farther marrs this Notion of *Reſurrection* is, that our Church ties us to believe not the *Reſurrection* ſimply, but the *Reſurrection of the Body* (which ſurely we cannot Interpret the *Bleſſedneſs* and *Immortality* of the Soul) agreeable to what our SAVIOUR profeſſeth for his Will, St. *John* 6. 40. *This is the Will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have Everlaſting Life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* And what will he raiſe up the *Soul*? That riſeth into another Life, as ſoon as it departeth this: And therefore the *Body* muſt be the ſubject of the laſt days Reſur-

Reſurrection; whence by the way we may take notice alſo, that *Reſurrection*, and *Everlaſting Life*, are not ſynonimous terms, but ſignifie two diſtinct things; for believers ſhall have *Everlaſting Life* given them, and be *Raiſed up* beſides.

7. Fourthly, it confines departed Souls, to very *Comfortleſs* and *inconvenient Dwellings*: For being releaſed from their luggages of fleſh, and toilſome burdens of Mortality (though they have done worthy things in this preſent State, and cordially ſerved the Intereſts of JESUS) yet an immediate tranſition into Glory, muſt not be their recompence. No, the expergefaction of their *Aereal* Congruity (which rouzeth it ſelf, upon their firſt ſolution from theſe cadaverous Bodies) prevents their ſo early paſſage to the higheſt Regions; that, as this Hypotheſis will have it, juſt upon their egreſſion out of theſe terrene *ergaſtula*, catcheth hold on the *proximate* Air; and forming it into ſutable Vehicles, forthwith claps them up therein, and ſecures their abode in vicinous places. And till they purifie themſelves to ſuch a degree, as to become fit for Union with *Æthereal* receptacles, they muſt be pent up in this inferiour World, and never think of emerging above the Terreſtrial *Atmoſphere*. Except it be a few of the *Heroically* Virtuous, and Men of extraordinary *Goodneſs* and *Religion* (one in a Million perhaps) this is the Fate of *Chriſtians* in general, at their diſmiſſion hence: They are removed but a little diſtance from the ſurface of the Earth, and muſt Hover about in the *Circumfluent* Air, till by their own induſtry, they can work themſelves up aloft, and gradually aſcend into a purer Element. And methinks the Air is a very unmeet habitation, for Holy Souls de-

ceaſed, both in reſpect of their Society, and other evils, that will their incommodate and moleſt them.

Firſt, their *Company* muſt needs be irkſome and ingratefull: For the Air is the Devils Territory, the Seat of his Empire, and *Metropolis* of his Dominion: And therefore he is ſtiled Ὁ ἄρχων τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, *The Prince of the Power of the Air.* There the ſupream *Magnifico*, and Principal head of the *Dæmoniacal* Body keeps his Court, as I may ſay, and ſits upon his Throne, attended with his black and griſly Legions: And from thence he iſſues his Edicts, and diſpenſeth his Commands, to the inferiour Miniſters, and ſubordinate members of the Curſed *Polity*; and theſe again, have their under-Agents, which they conſtantly imploy in the menage of their Intereſts, and ſend abroad into the ſeveral Quarters of the World, to propagate and eſtabliſh their *Helliſh* Kingdom. So that we muſt conclude the *Aereal* Regions to be fraught with Multitudes of malignant *Genii*, that are continually paſſing, repaſſing, and flying about from one place to another, upon miſcheivous Errands and Deſigns; and let the ſeparate Souls of Good Men beſtow themſelves where they can; yet ſtill ſo long as they are within the ambit of this fuliginous Air, they muſt alwayes be mingled with theſe lewd and malevolent Spirits, that will perpetually be intruding into their company. And though Providence has ſo hampered the malice, of this Rebel Rout, that they can by no means harm and injure them: Yet to be peſtered and haunted with their evill preſence, and to have them inceſſantly ſuperintending, and inſpecting their Actions; obſerving and prying into their carriage; mocking and ſcoffing at their Religion, and the like; muſt needs be wondrous burden-

beſ. 2.

burdenſome and offenſive to them: As it would be to the Righteous in this Life, to have their inſolent contumelious and implacable Enemies, alwayes at their heels, to watch their behaviour, and take cognoſcence of their doings, and to deride, and reprobate them upon all occaſions.

But beſides, if they be cooped up, within the *Atmoſphere* of the Earth, they muſt be obnoxious to many violencies and extremities, from Natural cauſes: ſometimes they will be parched with intemperate *Heat*, ſometimes almoſt frozen with exceſſive *Cold*, according to the Nature of the *Climates* they inhabit: Sometimes the Air is cloyed with ſmokie Fumes and Vapours: Sometimes filled with foggy Miſts and Exhalations: Sometimes conſtipated with Denſe and Pitchy Clouds, which every foot diſcharge themſelves in hideous Storms and Tempeſts; in flaſhes of Lightning, and claps of Thunder; in ſhowrs of Rain and Hail, *&c.* And if theſe in their rapid deſcent, chance to pervade their *diaphanous* Bodies, they muſt needs put them to intollerable torture. For their airy Vehicles, being as intimately united to them, as our Terreſtrial ones are to us; for them to have their tender Bodies pierced and dilacerated, with boiſterous ſhowrs of Rain or Hail, will be all one in point of miſery, as if we ſhould have our Bodies, transfixed with Darts and Arrows, or ſhot through with little pellets of Lead or Iron: For look what execution theſe do upon our, the ſame they do upon their Vehicles.

To avoid all theſe annoyances therefore, there is an expedient propoſed, which I cannot but ſmile at, while I ſet it down; it is this: When they foreſee Storms approaching, *They might take ſhelter as other living*

living Creatures doe, in Houſes, behind Walls, in Woods, Dales, Caverns, Rocks, and other obvious Places. A pretty conceit, and fit to make ſport, for ſuch as can think it worth the laughing at. As often as the Heavens lowr, and ſcowl upon the Earth with an angry Countenance; the poor harbourleſs Souls, muſt preſently betake them all to their ſhifts: Some muſt ſhrig into dirty Stables; others muſt crowd into hollow Trees; others muſt ſculk behind rotten Hedges; others muſt neſtle into Cony-burrows; and not dare to look out till the Storm be over, for fear they be rapt on the pate with Rain-drops, or have their *Tiffany* Veſts blown off their backs, with the ruſling Winds that threaten them: Others muſt ſneak under the bellies of Cattle, to ſave themſelves from the Weather; and others muſt ſqueez through the Key-holes of Doors, to get into mens Houſes, unleſs they durſt venture down the Chimneys, or crawl up the Sink-holes. But not to be too impertinent: All the proviſions they can make for themſelves, will not ſecure them from one inconvenience; the frequent returns of *Night* and *Darkneſs*: For once in twenty four hours, they muſt neceſſarily loſe the Light and Influence of the Sun, and be inveloped in the conical ſhadow of the Earth; where unleſs it be the rays of the twinkling Starrs, or the languid beams of the pale-fac'd Moon (which in every *Interlunium*, or conjunction with the Sun, abſconds her ſelf) they have no light at all, to guide and cheriſh them; ſo that except they can ſee in the dark (which I preſume they cannot, becauſe then their *viſive* Organs would be bright and radiant, and viſible unto Men, as oft as they come near, or paſs by them in the Night-time) their condition in this reſpect, is exceeding forlorn. Where-

Wherefore it is to be hoped, there is a better place of reſidence, prepared for Divine and Holy Souls, when they relinquiſh this, than the *Air*. And thus much, I think is eaſily colligible from the inſpired Writings; in the 23. of St. *Luke*, we read of a flagitious Malefactor upon the Croſs; and how he there commenced his repentance, juſt at his Death; ſo that he could not poſſibly arrive, at ſuch an intrinſick and habitual Purity, before he was diſſolved; as according to this Hypotheſis, is requiſite to fit a Man, for an immediate aſcent to the ſublimeſt Regions, and the animation of an *Æthereal* Body: Yet our Bleſſed SAVIOUR there tells him, *this day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe*: And that Paradiſe, is a place diſtinct from, and more excellent than the *Air*; may be gathered out of the twelfth Chapter, of the ſecond Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*; there the *Apoſtle* informs us of a Man, caught up εως τριτου ουρανου, *into the Third Heaven*; which at the fourth Verſe, he affirms to be *Paradiſe*: So that *Paradiſe* muſt be the *Third Heaven*; that is the moſt lofty, and glorious Heaven of all: For it is denominated the *Third Heaven*, not *ratione numeri*, but *dignitatis*. As we ſay, that Man is *thrice* Happy, and *thrice* Bleſſed, whoſe condition is moſt proſperous and fortunate. So Paradiſe is ſaid to be the *Third Heaven*, as being the moſt eminent, and *ſuperlative* in Dignity and Excellence. And for the ſame reaſon it is termed שמי השמים *The moſt Heavenly Heavens*. 1. *Kings* 8. 27. *Pſalm* 148. 4. Now if this Penitent Theif, whoſe ſanctity (by reaſon of the ſhort ſpace of time, intercurrent betwixt his Converſion and departure) was very imperfect; was notwithſtanding tranſlated into *Paradiſe*, the *Third Heaven*, or *Sedes Beatorum*,

torum, upon the day of his *Crucifixion:* it is clear from hence, that not only the eminently, and heroically Virtuous; but alſo the competently, if ſincerely Religious, ſhall inſtantly upon their ſeparation from the Body, be admitted into the moſt Bleſſed place, and perfect Felicity, that they can be capable of, before the General Reſurrection and Final Judgment. and if ſo, the *Aereal* Regions can be no permanent receptacle of them after Death; nor have they ſuch a Congruity in them, as does fatally Chain them to *Airy* Bodies, and ſo neceſſitate their abode in thoſe places: If they had, our Church is guilty of vile uncharitableneſs, in that ſhe does not ſupplicate for the Dead; who then are in a capacity of bettering themſelves by virtuous endeavours, and our interpellations for them might help conſiderably towards their improvement.

8. Fifthly, it ſuppoſeth *Men may Dye more than once:* For as many as are forced into the other World, while their Terreſtrial Congruity is in the height of invigoration, have no other remedy but to return hither, to get its *Petulance* quelled and abated; for ſo long as that continues ſtrong and prædominant, the *two* other aptitudes are conſopited and benummed; and therefore they cannot unite to *Aerial*, or *Æthereal* Vehicles: Nor can they meet with any Terreſtrial ones, in which to have the invigorated Principle caſtigated and debilitated, unleſs they be Born *anew* into this Life, and tread that Stage again, of which they were turned by a *præmature exit*: And till a fit opportunity invites them to re-enter it, they muſt reſt, GOD knows where, in a ſtate of ſilence and ſtupiditie. This one of the *Champions* of *Præexiſtence*

iſtence delivers in plain terms, though in a ſceptical manner. *Thoſe that paſs out of theſe Bodies, before the Terreſtrial Congruity be ſpoil'd, weakened, and orderly unwound; muſt return into the ſtate of inactivity: For the Plaſtick in them, is too highly awakened, to inactuate only an* Aerial *Body; and there being no other more congruous, ready at hand for to enter; it muſt needs ſtep back into its former ſtate of inſenſibility, and there wait its turn, till befitting matter call it forth again, into Life and Action.* All therefore at leaſt that dye *Infants*, or by violence, their Earthly Congruities being not *orderly unravel'd*, and *naturally diſſolved* and *extinguiſhed*; muſt back again into this World, time after time, till they hit upon mature and kindly expirations: So that it ſeems *Præexiſtence* and *Tranſanimation* go hand in hand: And the *Samian* Philoſopher might not be ſo much miſtaken, as ſome think he was, when he Sang of himſelf, *See Lux Orientalis pag.* 159. 160.

——Trojani tempore Belli,
Panthoides Euphorbus eram.——

For the *Trojan* falling by the hand of *Menelaus*, and his diſpoſeſſed Soul being to ſeek for a Body, might haply wind it ſelf into *Pythagoras*'s: But ſurely then Interpreters are groſly out, in their Expoſitions of that ſpeech of St. *Pauls*, *It is appointed for men, once to Dye.* And the Holy man was hardly aware of what he ſaid, when he told his Friends, —כי־שנות מספר— *When the years of number are come, I ſhall go the way I ſhall not return.* For, for ought he knew, he might have been cut off by a violent Death, and then a remigration hither would have been inevitable, or elſe this Hypotheſis is falſe: And were it true, it would give but

ſmall incouragement to *Martyrs* and *Souldiers*, who lay down their Lives for Religion, and their Country, to think that as a recompence for their *Magnanimous* Pieties, they ſhould be remanded back into this miſerable ſtate, where perhaps they may dye in the ſame Circumſtances again, and ſo lay a new train of infelicities, and entayl upon themſelves a freſh calamity: Though I doubt not but it would render Malefactors, exceeding venturous and daring in their nefarious Atcheivements: And when they are apprehended, and ſentenc'd to ſuffer Capitally for their delinquencies, it would chear them hugely, and make them jogg on merrily to their Execution, could they believe they ſhould only ſleep a while after Death, and then recover their forfeited lives again: They would never ſcruple to Rob and to Kill; nor when they have done, dread the Ax or the Halter, did they think that nothing would follow, but a ſhort interciſion of life, and then a recuperation thereof, whereby they ſhall be inabled to reſume the practice of their ſo gently mulcted Villanies, and to commit them over again, for the ſame Puniſhment.

9. In the laſt place, it makes the *Glory of Heaven Tranſient* and *Amiſſible:* For grant that Millions of Souls, reaſcend the *Æthereal Elyſium*, and be inſtalled anew in their *Priſtine* beatitude; yet if *Præexiſtence* ſpeaks truth, they injoy no more now, than what they poſſeſſed long ago: And the ſame enticements, that tempted them to Sin, and betrayed them to miſery at firſt, may do it a ſecond time: For their condition being but the ſame it was, they are liable to be wrought upon by the ſame ſeducements, that before trepann'd them out of it. What though at preſent the

the Plaſtick be tamed, and ſubjugated, and the Intellectual Powers, be lively and vigorous? Yet in tract of time their ſenſitive faculties, that are now wound up and laid aſleep, may revive and ſtirr afreſh. When they have ſnored a while, and taken a conſiderable Nap, they may ſtart out of their drowzie Fit, and becoming regnant as once they were, exile them from the Kingdom of the Bleſſed; 'tis like the Phanſiful *Platoniſt* can delight himſelf in thinking, it ſhall be thus indeed: That the Rational and Plaſtick principles ſhall act by turns through endleſs Viciſſitudes, and rule *alternatim* in the Souls of Men to infinite Ages; the one ſtill flagging and intermitting, when the other are moſt intended. But then the Great Queſtion will be, how theſe Spirits, when they have deſerted their happineſs a ſecond time, ſhall be able to regain it: For though the *Son* of GOD came down from Heaven, and ſuffered once for our Redemption; yet to imagine that he ſhould reſtore us again, by the ſame means; and as often as we fall, be Crucified for our recovery, would be a ſtrange ſurmiſe, and Contradictory to the Scripture.

I could reckon up ſeveral other Abſurdities, of the like Nature with the præcedent; but becauſe I think thoſe already ſpecified, are more than enough to evince, that the Souls *Heterogeneity*, as above ſtated, is but an empty fiction; and not ſo much the Daughter of Truth, as the ſpurious Iſſue of a working Brain, and too parturient Phanſie: I here take leave of this Objection, and proceed to the next.

CHAP. X.

1. *Another* Objection *againſt* Præexiſtence, *is* our utter forgetting it in this Life. 2. *A tripartite* Evaſion *of the Objection propounded.* 3. *An Anſwer to the firſt Part.* 4. *An Anſwer to the Second Part.* 5. *An Anſwer to the Third Part of it.*

1. THat which in the Second place makes againſt *Præexiſtence* is, that men upon Earth, *are no whit Conſcious to themſelves of their living in a former State, nor of any thing therein repreſented to them*: They remember not the Polity there erected and eſtabliſhed; nor the Laws there enacted and ordained; nor the Cuſtoms there uſed and obſerved: The ſituation of their Dwellings, the faſhion of their Bodies, the nature of their Imployments, the manner of their Converſe, and the quality of their Company, are all clearly out of their thoughts, nor can they for their hearts re-call them. And it ſeems incredible, that we ſhould have injoyed a Bleſſed life, before our baniſhment into this, where we had our Reaſon perfect, and our Faculties entire; our Spirits paſſive, and our Minds attentive (ſuch as now they are) apt to entertain the *Scænes* of things, with ready notices, and deep reſentments; and yet during our whole continuance here, be unable to recollect, and give the leaſt account of thoſe commune occurrencies, which were there

there moſt frequent and obvious to us. Had we ever inhabited the *Æthereal* Paradiſe, it would ſcarce have been forgotten; we ſhould ſtill have kept old Records of it, filed in our memories, which though they might have been much oblitterated and defaced, yet a curious ſearch and examination of them, would diſcover ſomething in them legible, as to the ſplendor and rare Felicities of the place.

2. But to take off this Objection it is Reply'd; that the Souls of Men in their deſcent from above, run through all thoſe *Inconveniences*, that are moſt *Prejudicial* and *Pernicious* unto *Memory*: And therefore 'tis no wonder they forget the Circumſtances of the *Superiour* Life; Nay, it would be a miracle if they ſhould do otherwiſe.

The things moſt fatal unto *Memory*, are obſerved to be Three. *viz. Want of being reminded of a Matter. Deſuetude, of thinking on it.* And *Extraordinary change in the Body.* And of all theſe there is a joynt influence, and moſt eminent concurrence, to blurr and eat out the fair *Ideaes*, and memorial Characters of things, wherewith the Soul was ſtamped and impregnated, in an higher State: So that the Evaſion contains three *Creep-holes*, out at which the Defenders of *Præexiſtence* would ſlink away, and ſlily convey themſelves, to avoid the force of this Objection: But I think the *mouſes* may eaſily be ſtopped, and their eſcape prevented.

3. For though the fore-cited accidents, which are confeſſedly diminutive and deſtructive of *Memory*, betide us in our Confinement to theſe fleſhly Priſons; yet they are not ſufficient to *aboliſh* our Remembrance of our ancient Condition, and to ſink us down into a *perfect Oblivion* of all the paſſages and concerns thereof. First,

First, the want of being reminded of them, is not enough to do it. There are many trifles in the World, which passing but once under our Observation, cleave fast unto our memories ever after; nor can we finally eject them, though we never meet with any like occurrencies, to revoke them into our thoughts: And if our hasty notation of meer trivials, can cause so permanent impressions; we must needs be more retentive and memorious, of those Objects that entertained our notices above. For their Glory and remarkableness, could not but draw us to solemn and studied *animadversions* of them; and our long continuance amongst them, induce us often to reiterate the same, and so fix them Eternally in our minds. And indeed were these two particulars but well considered, what sumptuous and affecting Objects, adorn and beautifie the *Æthereal* Pallace: And what a tedious while we spent (according to the *Platonick Hypothesis*) in conversing with them, and musing on them, in viewing and re-viewing, and passionately admiring their splendor and magnificence; that we should forget them all, for lack of being *Remembered* of them, would seem impossible.

But to come closer to the purpose; this first member of the Evasion, we want opportunities, and occasions to re-mind us of our *Præexistence* is a pure pretence and palpable Figment. For imagine the supposal were true, that we were once loose from these uneasy Clods, that now afflict and burden us; and free to Range through the transparent Skies, in company with glittering Angels: Admit we were once near Neighbours to the Sun, or dwelt in those Serene and Lightsome Countries, scituate beyond the Course of *Saturn*: Yet is the *Scæne* of *that* World, so different from *this*, that there

there is no reſemblance at all between them? Can we here eſpy no *Analogous* Objects, to be fit *Memorandums* of thoſe, with which we were there acquainted? Certainly here are ſome very conſimilous to them (if not the ſame) the occurſions of which, could not poſſibly miſs of bringing them to our mind, if they were more than *Phantaſtick* and *Imaginary*: For grant we were once poſſeſſed of thoſe *Remote* and *Lucid* habitations now mentioned; What in all likelihood, was our Imployment there? Was it not to contemplate and adore the *Deity*? To mark and ſtudy the Works of the Creation? To ſearch and dive into the *Phænomena* of Nature? And to entertain one another with friendly Converſe, and the profitable diſcourſes of *Religion* and *Philoſophy*? And if theſe were our Excerciſes, in the *Æthereal* Tracts (as without diſpute they were) to ſay we are here deſtitute, of apt *Mementoes* of our living there, would be a complaint unjuſt and frivolous: Becauſe we are ingaged now, in the very ſame affairs, that we then attended; which undoubtedly would revive our Memory of them, if they had ever of old been familiar to us, and conſequently of our Native Stations, wherein they were practiſed and often repeated. And beſides, if the Advocates of *Præexiſtence* deceive us not, they have given us a juſt repreſentation of the *place* of our firſt abode; of the *Bodies* we wore, and of the *Cauſes* of our denudation of them. And theſe again are fair hints, and proper *Items*, to remind us of that place, and thoſe *Bodies*, and the evill Contingencies, that deprived us of both: But ſince notwithſtanding we are thus prompted to it, by variety of occaſions, we can remember nothing of our *Primitive* Life; it is ſhrewdly to be ſuſpected, that it,

together

together with all the Circumſtantiations thereof, is but Fictitious and Poetical.

4. Nor Secondly, will ſuch a *deſuetude of thinking* on the occurrencies of our *Priſtine* State, as is pretended to ſeize us, in our deſcent from thence, be able to expunge and raiſe them out of our Remembrance: For it is not ſo much a bare diſ-uſe of ruminating on things, that makes us forget them; as the Ebullition of freſh thoughts, and new Phantaſms into our minds, which daſh out all former Images, and repreſentations there delineated. So that I am apt to believe, if a Man ſhould fall into a profound ſleep, and reſt ſecurely in the ſame, for many years together; yet at his evigilation, he would find his head fraught with lively *Ideaes* of ſuch things, as he practiſed and obſerved before his repoſe. And the probability of this methinks, is ſomething warranted, by what hath happened to *Chronical* Sleepers; who having lain for ſeveral Dayes, yea Weeks together, in the *Arms* of dull and heavy ſlumbers; at their expergefaction, have returned inſtantly to thoſe negotiations, they had in hand when they fell to reſt, and have related exactly how they left them in every little Circumſtance. If therefore in deſcending from the upper World, we were intercepted (as they would make us believe) in a ſtate of ſilence, and kept bound a while in the Chains of ſenſeleſsneſs and inactivity, and an abſolute ceſſation from thinking on all paſt concerns; yet there is no neceſſity from this, of our being overwhelmed with a *total Oblivion* of them: For we meeting in that ſtate with no new *ſeries* of cogitations, to diſturb our minds, and diſcompoſe our memories, and crowd out thoſe Notices, that before were fixed and recorded in them; they

they cannot be worn off, by a meer *deſuetude* of reflecting on them; eſpecially conſidering they were deeply radicated, and that this *deſuetude* was but ſhort and tranſient: For though Lapſed Souls may (as the *Platoniſts* conceive) remain a long time in a ſtupid and inert condition; yet if the time of their lodging there (according to their own computation of it) be compared with their abode (as they meaſure it) in the ſpatious *Æther*, it will be very inconſiderable; ſcarce bearing the proportion of an hours ſleep, to a dayes wakefulneſs: And as it is impoſſible that an hours ſleep ſhould blot all that buſineſs out of a Mans mind, which he diſpatcht the whole day before: So it is improbable, that their lying dozed a while in the Air, ſhould rob them of the Remembrance of thoſe Tranſactions, about which they were imployed all the precedent part of their life: Or if the *Aerial* pernoctation, be not generally thus ſhort, to all that drop into it; yet (which will ſerve our turn) it is acknowledged to be ſome: For as the Grand *Propugnator* of the Opinion confeſſeth, many by the procuration and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Nature, *may be fetcht from the pureſt Ætherial Regions, into a Humane Body, without ſerving any long Apprentiſhip in the intermediate Air:* And conſequently then, they ſhould be able to bring ſome intelligence with them from the other World, they deſerting it ſo lately, and their *deſuetude* of thinking on the affairs thereof, being not very laſting. *See* Dr. *More his Immor. B.* 3. *C.* 13. *S.* 10.

5. To the third cauſe of forgetfulneſs above noted, I Anſwer; that though extraordinary *Changes* in Body, be *Labefactive* of Memory; yet it does not follow that the Souls ſhifting of her Vehicle, ſhould

throw all those objects out of her mind, the memorative semblances of which, were there limmed out (as I may say) and pictured: For her egression out of one Body, and susception of another, fitly prepared to entertain her, is not so banefull unto Memory, as divers *Mutations*, to which this Earthly Carcasse is obnoxious: And though external Casualties, Diseases, and Senitude, work not so great a *Change*; yet they may be more disadvantageous to that faculty, than Death it self, which dissseizeth us of our Body. This I know our Adversaries will not allow of: They tenaciously hold the contrary; that the dislodging of the Soul out of the Body, is more hurtfull to the Memory, than those *Changes* which are superinduced to it: And hereupon they conclude, that if *Changes* wrought in the Body, by old Age, Sickness, or Disasters, can root out the Memory of things in this life, as they have sometimes done; then much better may the Memory of *Præexistence*, be done away by the Souls descent out of that state, because therein she undergoes a bigger *Change*, being forced to forsake the Vehicle, to which she was united; but I shall hardly be brought over to their perswasion; for though *Changes* in Body, may often imbecill, and sometimes utterly dispoil the Memory of things past; yet it is not necessary, that the Souls *Changing* of her Body, should therefore do so, because it is not so injurious to her Faculties: For the aforesaid evills, Violence, Ægritude, and Senility, may occasion a leisure of the Organs, or Distemperature of the Spirits, usefull and subservient to the Supream and Intellectual Functions; and thus Memory must needs be weakened and destroyed, till the inflicted mischief be repaired.

repaired. And no wonder; for ſo even Reaſon it ſelf, by accidental rudeneſſes and miſchances, may be much debilitated, yea quite ſhattered and diſſolved into brutiſhneſs and phrenſie: But ſince it was not ſo ſerved, by our Removal into theſe ſquallid Dungeons; from thence what I ſaid even now, is fully verified: that if the ſuppoſed Paſſage of the Soul, out of a *Præexiſtent* Body, were real and true, yet it could be nothing ſo prejudicial to her, as ſome *Changes* that are incident to this Body, during her reſidence here: If it were, not only our *Memory*, but *Reaſon* too, ſhould have been catheired and loſt, by our migration out of thoſe Vehicles we formerly actuated, into theſe which we now inliven; but that ſtill remaining ſound and entire, and ſpecificating our being by its eminence in us; it is manifeſt (I ſay) that the wrong and violence, ſuſtained by *Præexiſtent* Souls, in the *Change* of their habitations, is not ſo great as that which they ſuffer, from the tragical *Diſorders* that frequently afflict their Earthly Tabernacles: And therefore though ſome decays and ruins, which fall out in thoſe, may denude Men of Memory, by perverting the frame and conſtitution of them; yet it does not follow, that their firſt immerſion into them, ſhould Cloud them with a black *Oblivion* of that life, which they are preſumed to have ſpent on high: For then they ſliding peaceably out of one Body into another, whoſe Organs were rightly framed, and Spirits duely tempered, their bare tranſlocation could not be effective of ſuch a thing; if it could, the immediate conſequent of it would be monſtrouſly abſurd and impious; for thence it would inſtantly be inferred, that when People by Death are ſummoned

hence into unknown Regions provided for them; they ſhall quite be bereav'd of their *Memory*, and carry neither applauſe nor remordency of Conſcience into the ſucceeding World; but if they have done well, their Benefactions ſhall be forgotten; and if they have done amiſs, the ſenſe of their Impieties ſhall be buried with them; and as for the never-dying Worm, ſo much talkt of by us, this one blow knocks out all his teeth, which are ſaid to corrode the guilty: If the premiſed Doctrine be true, this is a Natural conſequent of it; for it being granted, that the meer *Tranſlation* of Souls, out of *Aiery* into *Earthly* Bodies, is enough to make them oblivious of all the Circumſtances of their *Præexiſtent* life: We have reaſon to conclude, that their *Return* back out of theſe, into them again, will have the ſame influence and effects upon them, in reference to the paſſages of this preſent State. Were this deduction as true, as ſome conceive that Tradition to be, which is the foundation of it; it would give Piety and Goodneſs ſuch a mortal wound, that they would quickly bleed to Death: Then Virtue might meet with ſome ſtore of Flatterers, but very few Friends; for it would proclaim Religion but a ſorry Scare-Crow, and an empty ſhadow; and pronounce Men ridiculous Fools, that ſhould be affrighted with it, or allured by it: Suppoſing therefore that we *Præexiſted*, we muſt either *Remember* ſomething in this preſent life, of what we knew and acted, in that which is paſt; or elſe we muſt ground upon it, that we ſhall perfectly *forget*, that ever we were in this World, at our departure out of it; and who that is not a profeſt *Atheiſt* can do it? Thus for ought I perceive, the *Objection* yet ſtands unſhaken, notwith-

notwithstanding the foregoing Batteries made against it; and is so far from reeling into a ruinous heap, that it holds as firm as ever, and Triumphs in its own impregnables.

CHAP. XI.

1. *A Third* Objection. 2. *A Fourth* Objection.

1. IN the Third place it may be Objected against *Præexistence*, that it makes it *possible*, *nay necessary*, *that many Souls should enter into* one *Body*: For before the Soul descends Εις γενεσιν, and comes to be joyned with a Terrestrial Vehicle, it supposeth both her Νους, that is the *Supream* and *Intellectual Powers*, and also her sensitive Faculties, to be Sunk into a very low condition of *Lassitude* and *Debility*; yea to be even quite consopited and stupified: So that now only her *Plastick* is exalted, and displays it self in a rampant energie, which puts her upon hunting (as I may say) after fitly prepared matter, into which to convey and incorporate her self; and at last being toucht with invisible reeks, and steems of *Atoms*, that Issue from the *new-Conceptions* of the Womb; and being delightfully wooed by these *Hysterical Effluviaes*, she still moves nearer and nearer towards the source out of which they fly, and never rests, till her Bridal with the Body be Consummated, and she be wholly absorpt of that slimy Spirituous *Mass*, whence flowed those

thoſe gratefull and attractive emiſſions. But now this *Plaſtick* Principle, which rules the *Stupid* and *Imperceptive* Souls, being *blind* and *ſenſleſs*, what hinders but *two*, or *three*, or *more* of them, following the conduct of its heedleſs *impetus*, may be hurried down together, and jumbled into the ſame lump of *Spumous* Matter, and ſo joyntly exerciſing their efformative Power upon it, ſhape it into a *Bipartite*, or *Tripartite* Monſter, according to the number of the *Inmates?* Nay, the thing is not only poſſible, but thus methinks it muſt *inevitably* happen in moſt Generations: For the expirations of life in the Air, being far more numerous than the Bodily preparations upon Earth, allmoſt every little Corner of it, will be full of *Dormant* Spirits: And the *Ambient* Air being thus thronged with them, every *Atmoſphere* ariſing from the Principles of Generation, muſt include a good Company: And they all Lying within the compaſs of its activity, why ſhould not the ſame influence that Charms down *one*, to Unite to thoſe Rudiments of life, tempt the *reſt* to do ſo too, (they in every reſpect being as fit and eaſy to be wrought upon) and ſo all Co-enter into one Body? Nor will the *Spirit* of *Nature*, which is ſaid to have a great hand in Conducting Souls, to their Earthly Priſons, afford any help at all, at this dead lift: For that is a ſubſtance without *Senſe and Animadverſion too*, and ſo more like to promote the Error we now diſcourſe of, than any way to prevent it; though truly to ſpeak my own thoughts, I believe there is no ſuch Creature in Being: And this very Clauſe of her Definition, *that ſhe is a Subſtance without Senſe and Animadverſion*, ſeems to prove as much, it being little leſs in my apprehenſion, than

a

a Contradiction; as much as to ſay, a *material Spirit*: For there, the *want of Senſe* and *Animadverſion*, the immediate and inſeparable property of *Matter*, is aſcribed to the Soul of the World; which argues plainly ſhe is no *Spirit*; for a *Spirit* is oppoſite to Matter in *Eſſence*, and therefore muſt be the like, in all its *Eſſential* and immediate *Attributes*; which the *Spirit* of *Nature* is not, if ſhe be rightly defined, as before was noted, to be *devoid of Senſe and Animadverſion*.

2. Laſtly, *Præexiſtence* will be excepted againſt, in that *it ſuppoſeth the reſt of the Planets, to be Peopled with Mankind:* For if the whole *Cœtus* of *Præexiſtent* Souls, did Originally Cohabit in thoſe tranquillous Regions, that are ſtretched out beyond the height of *Saturn*; it cannnot be that their Apoſtacy ſhould tranſmit them all directly to this little Globe of Earth, and that they ſhould miſs of the other *Planets* in the way, whoſe bulks are Vaſter, and Scituations nearer to the Happy place of their firſt abode: And yet if they chanced to light into any of them, what will be their Fortune there? Shall they ever be redeemed, and put in a Capacity of recovering their forfeited Bleſſedneſs, or not? To ſay they ſhall not, would be to ſcandalize Providence, and to tax GOD who declares himſelf, to be no Προσωποληπτης, with a baſe Partiality, in that he paid a price for our Ranſom, but grudges to do the like for them, who are every way as deſerving as our ſelves. Redeemed therefore they muſt be; but how? He cannot *depoſite* the ſame λυτρον for them, that he did for us; *For* CHRIST *dyeth no more: Death hath no more Dominion over* HIM; nor can another

another ſo precious be thought on; nor can one of leſs value ſerve the turn: So that what will become of them I know not; only they will be very miſerable, or elſe I Conclude (which is moſt likely) that *there is no* PRÆEXISTENCE.

FINIS.

313785